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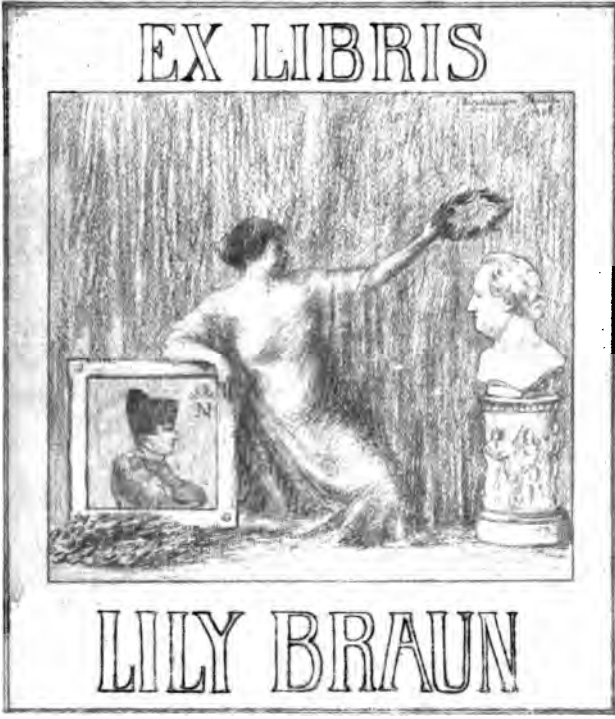
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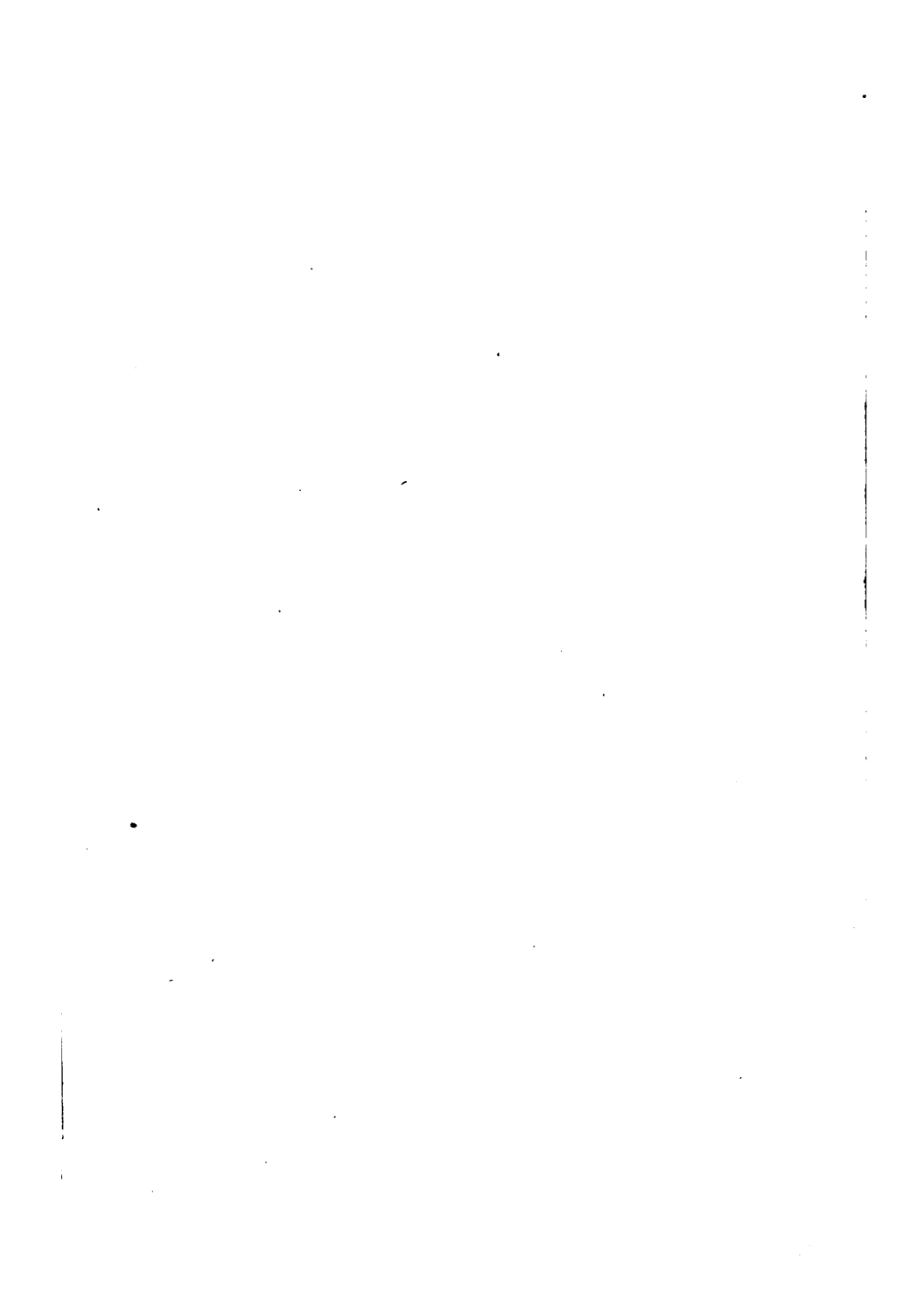
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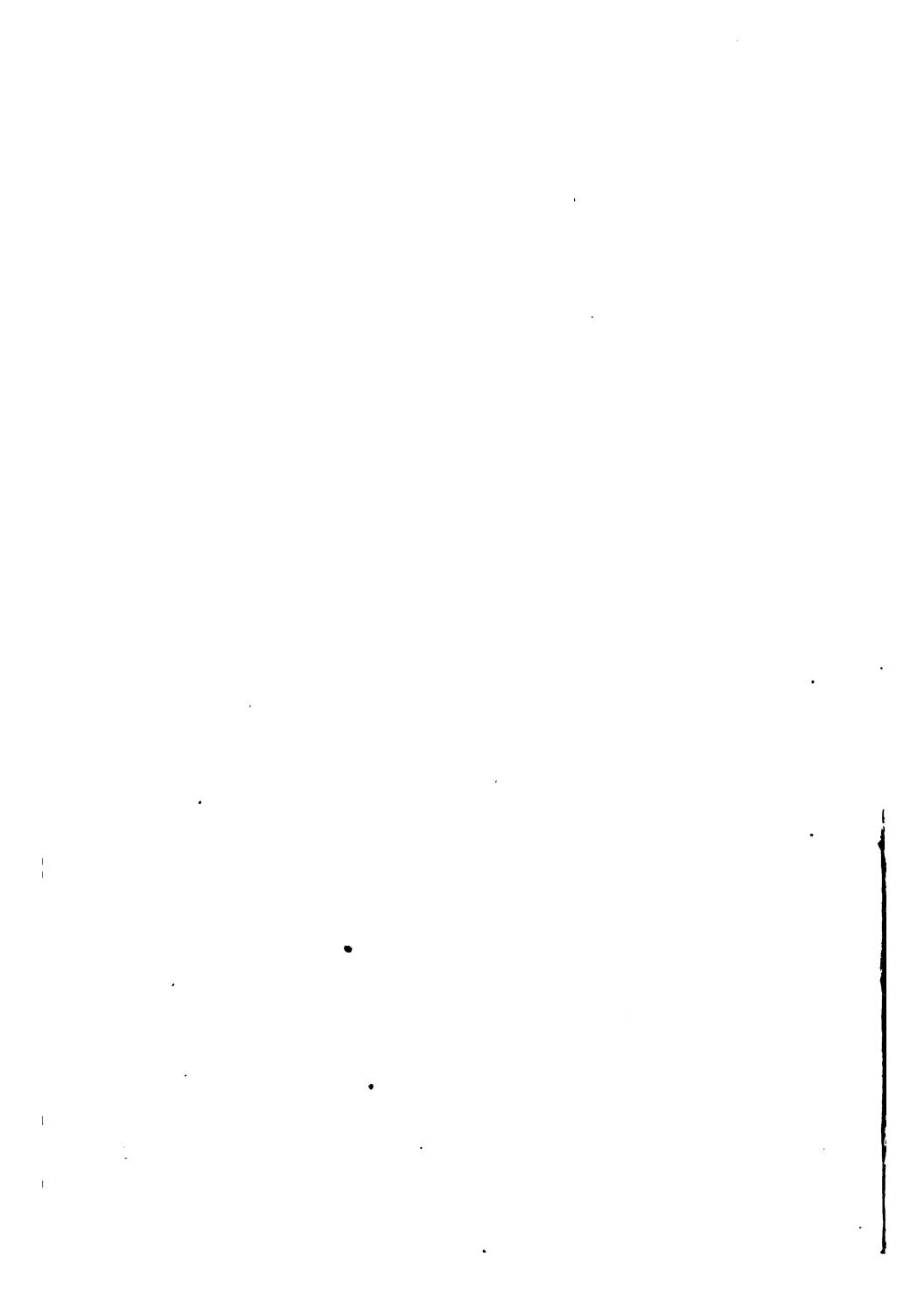
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WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE



# WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

A RECORD OF THE  
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT IN THE  
BRITISH ISLES

WITH

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF MISS BECKER

BY

HELEN BLACKBURN

11



WILLIAMS & NORGATE

14 HENRIETTA ST., COVENT GARDEN, LONDON  
AND 7 BROAD ST., OXFORD

1902

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## P R E F A C E

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THE effort to bring political liberty to the daily lives of women is not an isolated movement, nor a mere sudden outgrowth; it forms part of the continuity of history and must be treated as such; it is part of the continuous action and reaction between law and custom out of which human institutions are moulded and by which public conscience is modified.

This book aims, therefore, at presenting facts, not arguments, history, not theory, as a help towards basing the action of the present on experience rather than sentiment.

In compiling these pages the writer has had full access to all the materials which could be furnished by the Women's Suffrage offices, in addition to her own collection of literature on the subject, and personal intercourse with many of the early workers in the movement.

Part I. gives a retrospective glance at the earlier features of the social development which has brought about the Women's Suffrage movement.

Every great movement resolves itself, in ultimate analysis, into the action of individual lives, typical of the nurture and aspirations of their time.

So it has been in the Women's Suffrage movement: one life above all others has left the impress of its intellectual force and deep sympathy with human sorrows. Accordingly Part II. takes the form of a biographical sketch of Miss Lydia Becker, as the best introduction to the story of the work, and to the underlying motives and the methods of the workers therein.

Parts III., IV. and V. essay to marshal the leading facts and features of the movement in a concise narrative from the passing of the second Reform Act in 1867 to the present time. Dates and other scaffolding of the movement have been arranged, for convenience of reference, in two charts, while various documents, together with a bibliography, will be found in the Appendix.

HELEN BLACKBURN.

*December 15th, 1901.*

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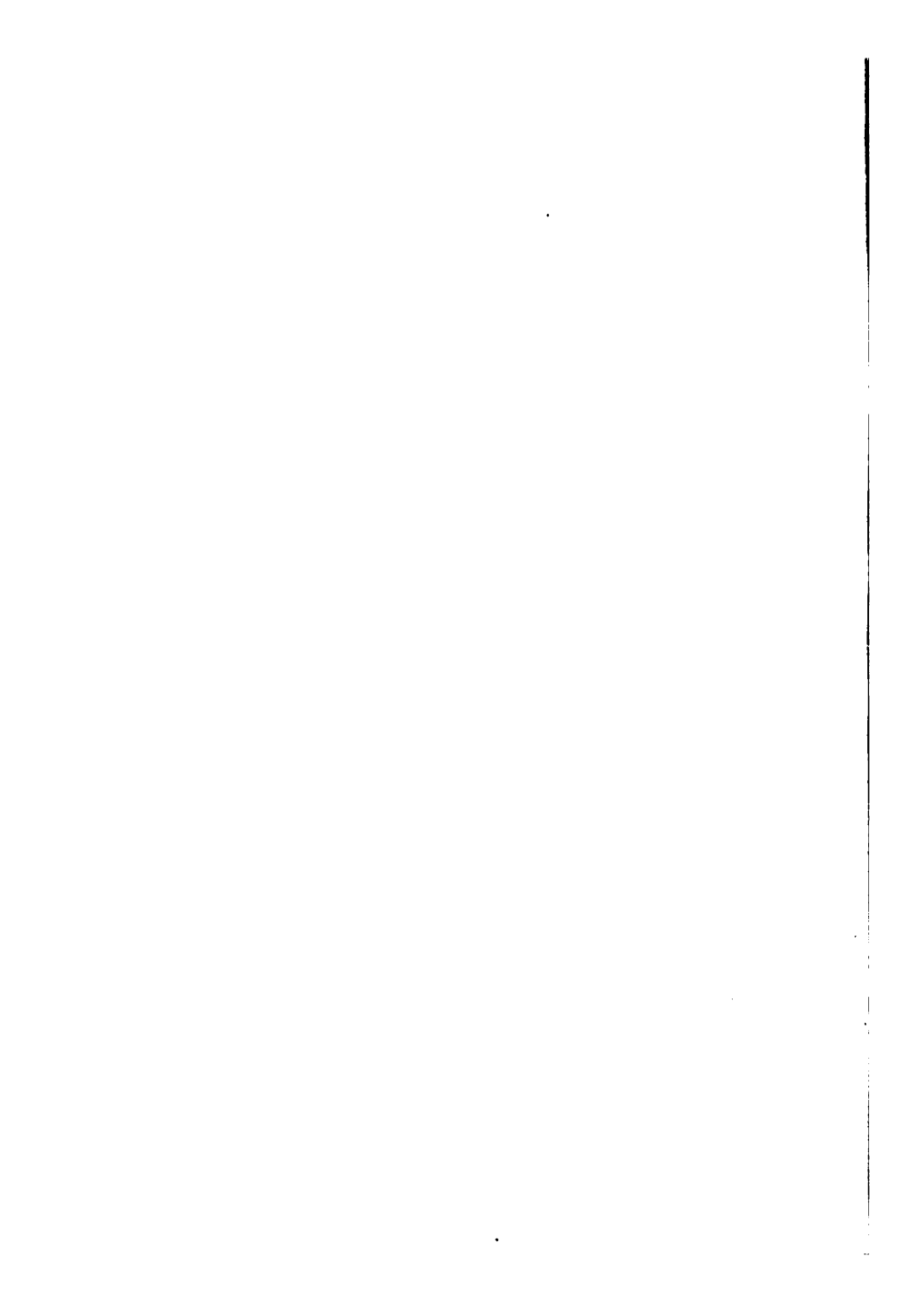
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Seal of the Abbey of Wilton—one of the four great abbeys whose abbesses received frequent writs for military service, and summons to attend the Council of the King (34th Edward I.). The effigy represents St. Eadgitha or Edith of Wilton. Died 984. Daughter of King Edgar. The high esteem in which she was held is seen by her effigy being used for the seal of the Abbey of Wilton where she was a nun. (After an engraving in *Archæologia*, vol. xviii.)

# WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

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## PART I.

BEFORE THE REFORM ACT OF 1867.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### RETROSPECTIVE.

##### § 1. *Our Early Heritage.*

ANGLO-SAXON, Roman and Feudal influences, are all intermingled in the legal system of Great Britain to-day. Each has left some impress on the relations of women to public duties, and has helped in shaping our present condition. Of these three, the Anglo-Saxon is the pervading influence. Naturally it has become so, for Society organized on the basis of the Parish as in Saxon England, preserves more of the common ground of companionship between men and women, and its responsibilities are more closely interwoven between them, than is the case in a Society organized on the basis of the Camp as under Roman sway, or of the Castle as under the Feudal *régime*.

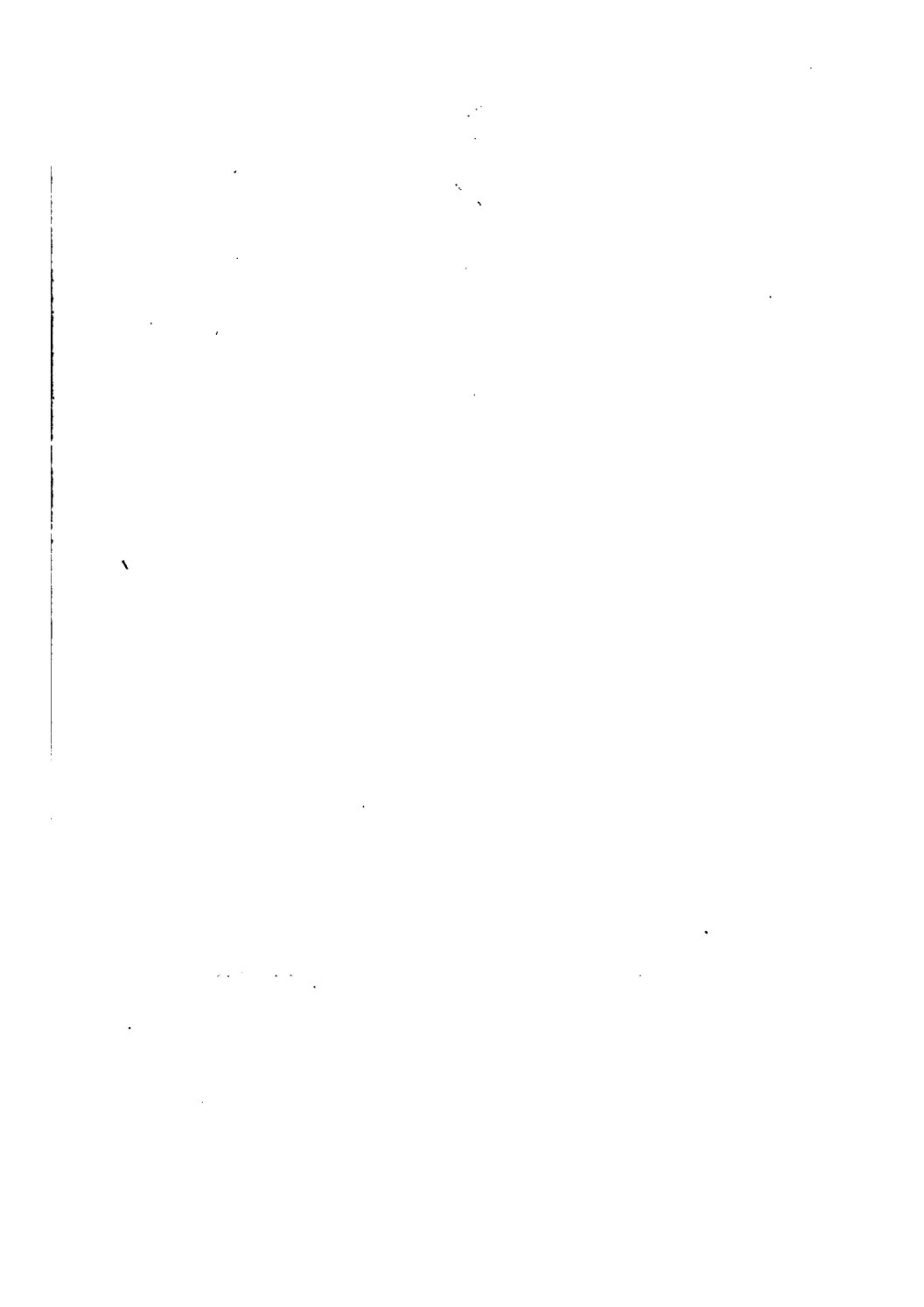
It is therefore part of the continuity of historical development that the movement towards recognizing,

the public duties of women should have made most progress amongst the English-speaking race, the founders of the Constitutional form of Government.

Of all the great Indo-Germanic races, the Anglo-Saxon has kept closest to the free and open life of the early Aryans and has preserved best that idea of companionship between men and women of which traces remain in prehistoric times of other races. The Anglo-Saxon, like all other of the early Aryan systems of jurisprudence, looked on women as under the guardianship of men, but their idea of that protection was modified by their preference for life in separate independent homesteads, rather than in wall-begirt cities,—thus whereas the early Roman law construed protection as complete absorption of the will and the possessions of the wife, the Saxon law construed it as ensuring to women their share of personal independence.<sup>1</sup>

It is part of the continuity of history that when the feudal co-ordination of Society under Sovereign Lords invoked the careful protection of hereditary rights, possessions and titles and honours were transmitted by right of birth. Though the "spear side" was held of first importance and had first place in those days of warlike nurture, still the "spindle side" was never permitted to succumb. Other things being equal, birth, not sex, determined the devolution of responsibilities. The

<sup>1</sup> Those who would study this point will find much of value in the monograph *Married Women's Property in Anglo-Saxon and Norman Law*, by Florence Griswold Buckstaff, published by the American Academy of Political and Social Science; also in the articles on the above by Miss Sara Entrican, B.A., in *Englishwoman's Review* of October 1896 and April 1897.





Seal of Mary de St. Paul, Countess of Pembroke. Died 1377. One of the peeresses summoned to send representatives to the Council of the King (35th Edward III.). Daughter of the Earl of St. Paul in France, married Audomar de Valentia, Earl of Pembroke, who was killed in a tournament on their marriage day. Founder of Pembroke College, Cambridge. (From a cast of the seal in the Harleian MSS., British Museum.)

seals of women were as much tokens of their own act and deed as the seals of men.

The maintenance of orderly conduct amongst their retainers, by court of frank pledge, and other territorial obligations, devolved on the holder of the manor, irrespective of that holder being lord or lady. So too the duty of providing men and arms for the King's wars.

No one wishes the conditions of those times revived. The right over life and death can no more be passed back from the Justices of the Crown to the territorial magnate, than the old assize of bread and ale satisfy modern requirements. But we still owe much to those conditions. When we resent the too great care that the law still at times shows for property rather than for persons, it is well to remember that it was the respect for property—the exaggerated respect, it may be—which compelled recognition of the woman's heritage, and preserved to the public conscience the perception that public duties are not exclusively male. The salient instance of this perception is of course our hereditary monarchy. It has been saved by its very visible position in the fabric of the State, so that the lustre of our Sovereign Queens could not be hidden, while various smaller parochial rights have survived rather by careless oblivion of their existence, than by desire for their preservation.

It is too much forgotten that the sovereign rights of the Queen's Majesty are safeguarded by the statute passed in the first year of the reign of Queen Mary, "An Act that the regal power of this Realm is as full in the Queen's Majesty as ever it was in her noble

ancestors." But it was not till Lord Romilly's Act in 1850 that the every-day rights of ordinary women were safeguarded in the interpretation of the law, and by that time those which made for her independent status as a citizen had been gradually set aside, whether by statute or by non-user.

The text of the first of these Acts may be studied in Appendix A.

### § 2. *The Advent of Discouragement.*

Whatever the disadvantages of the feudal system, whatever the hindrance its organization interposed for the development of the higher at the expense of the lower ranks of Society, the feudal system did one great service to women, by its carefulness to preserve hereditary rights. There was thus a high tradition always present of what women might do. Though such occurrences as the appointment of a woman as custodian of a castle, or her succession to the office of sheriff (where such office was hereditary), or her liability to attend the King in council and in camp, or her power to grant charters, or to vote for the knights of the shire were not frequent—still they were facts that actually happened; when they did happen there was nothing extraordinary or exceptional about them; they were incidents in the natural order of things.

The question of who was the right person for the right place was chiefly a question of birth. It has now come to be chiefly a question of popular election, and it was in the period of transition from the days of determination by inheritance, to the days of determina-



tion by popular election that the responsibilities of women *as* women came to be treated as matters open to question.

How did this come about? It would be outside the scope of this book to answer that enquiry with any detail,—moreover, it has been well done already by Mrs. Stopes in her *British Freewomen*—but two important influences have profoundly affected the condition of women; one more especially affects the cultured, the other the industrial portion of the community.

Side by side with the Peeress had stood the Abbess. Women who sought a career outside the domestic circle had found it in one or other of the Religious Orders. These offered opportunity to the studious, the contemplative, the philanthropic for honoured and honourable careers, and often for attaining to positions of great influence. The great Abbesses of Barking, Shaftesbury and Wilton, who filled the territorial duties of great land-owners, were powers in the land. The education afforded by conventual establishments was the best to be acquired at the time: they were to all intents and purposes the colleges and high schools of the centuries from Alfred to Henry VII. With the disappearance of these stately centres of ordered life, the doors to honourable careers of studious, useful service were closed to many women, the stream of culture cut off from all except the few and exceptionally placed.

The influence which affected the industrial portion of the community was the disappearance of the Guilds, that remarkable system of co-operation which in the

fourteenth and fifteenth centuries supplied the workers in trades with a dignity and independence all their own. Working hand in hand with the Church, the Guilds created a system of mutual responsibility between their members and towards the community, as well as a system of protection against want for the sick and aged.

The abrupt annihilation of these two great institutions has been grievous for women. Each had held out a hand of equal welcome to them, amid the encroaching tendencies of legal pedantry which, held in check by the strong will of the Tudors, had full scope under the sway of James I.

The story of the "Long Ebb," as Mrs. Stopes happily phrases it, has been told by her in her *British Freewomen* with vigorous grasp, and to her pages the reader who would study this portion of our story in detail should turn.<sup>1</sup>

### § 3. *The Period of Non-User.*

It has been the misfortune of women in England that at the period when the fundamental lines of the Constitution were subjects of keen Parliamentary strife, they themselves lived in an atmosphere of discouragement which paralyzed their political existence.

The strong personality of Anne Clifford<sup>2</sup> stands out

<sup>1</sup> *British Freewomen, their Historic Privilege*, by Charlotte Carmichael Stopes, being one of the Social Science Series, published by Messrs. Swan Sonnenschein.

<sup>2</sup> Countess of Dorset, Montgomery, Pembroke. She died 1675, respected and honoured by all, at the age of eighty-six. Our portrait shows her as a young girl of thirteen.





**ANNE CLIFFORD, Countess of Dorset, Montgomery and Pembroke,  
1589-1675.**

as the last of the women of the old traditions—large-minded, generous-hearted, dignified and determined withal, she lived true to her motto, "Maintain your loyalty and preserve your rights." She upheld her lawful claim as hereditary Sheriff of Westmorland against King James I. himself, and she defended her castles against the troops of Cromwell. While her strenuous life closes the ancient type of aspirant womanhood, the writings of Mary Astell gave the first note of the aspirations only attained to by the women workers of to-day.

The Institution planned by Mary Astell was neither the Convent of the past, nor the College of this present time, but a kind of connecting link between them. And though the forces of the day were against her, and her plan remained only as a vision, yet it was a vision to encourage. Her *Serious Proposal to Ladies*, wherein her scheme was set forth, published in 1697, had in 1701 already reached a fourth edition.

"One great end of this Institution shall be, to expel that cloud of ignorance which custom has involved us in, to furnish our minds with a stock of solid and useful knowledge that the souls of women may no longer be the only unadorned and neglected things." Nor did she wish for any mere show of learning. The inmate of her Institution would not need to trouble herself in turning over a great number of books, "but take care to understand and digest a few well-chosen ones. Let her but obtain right ideas, and be truly acquainted with the nature of those objects that present themselves to her mind, and then no matter whether or no she be able to

tell what fanciful people have said about them. And thoroughly to understand Christianity as professed by the Church of England will be sufficient to confirm her in the truth, though she have not a catalogue of those practical errors which oppose it. Indeed a Learned Education of the women will appear so unfashionable that I began to startle at the singularity of the proposition, but was extremely pleased when I found a late ingenious author (whose book I met with since the writing of this) agree with me in my opinion. For speaking of the Repute that Learning was in, about 150 years ago, '*It was so very modish*'<sup>1</sup> (says he) '*that the fair sex seemed to believe that Greek and Latin added to their Charms and Plato and Aristotle untranslated were frequent ornaments of their Closets. One would think by the effects that it was a proper way of educating them, since there are no accounts in History of so many great women in any one age, as there are to be found between the years 1500 and 1600.*'"

The incidental remarks of other writers of the period confirm the impression of the miserable standard for women.

Thus Sir William Petty, writing of his daughter Anne, who inherited much of her father's talent for business, hopes that "one day arithmetick and accountantship will adorn a young woman better than a suit of ribands and keep her warmer than a damnable dear manteau."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Watson's *Reflections on Antient and Modern Learning*, pp. 349, 350.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Sir William Petty*, by Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, 1895, p. 227.

When John Aubrey (1670) contrasts the schools of his day with the nunneries where "young maydes were brought up with the good example of the nuns and learnt needlework, the art of confectionery, surgery, physick, drawing, writing, etc."<sup>1</sup>—it is an indication that whether or not the convent schools attained to all that might be desired, at any rate these arts were not attained by the schools of his own day, and we begin the better to understand how it became possible for a judicially minded writer to class women freeholders with those who "lie under natural incapacities and therefore cannot exercise a sound discretion, or so much under the influence of others that they cannot have a will of their own in the choice of candidates—of the *former* description are women, infants, idiots, lunatics, of the latter persons receiving alms and revenue officers."<sup>2</sup>

And yet even at the worst of times, what a partial view this is. England was never so poor in her children but some women were found to pass the lamp from hand to hand, and at the very time the words just quoted were being written, a group of able women were practically by their own lives refuting the imputation—women of whom a writer of undoubted impartiality<sup>3</sup> has said, "They did two things: they gave a great impulse to the literature of the country and they raised considerably

<sup>1</sup> The passage is curious, and will be found in full in Appendix B.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Heywood, *Digest of the Law respecting County Elections*, 1790, p. 158.

<sup>3</sup> "Mrs. Barbauld and Her Contemporaries," a paper read before the Bath Literary and Philosophic Association by Jerome Murch, 20th October 1876.

the mental and social position of women ; both results were probably attained to a greater extent, because the efforts were comparatively quiet." They were women in whom were combined the forces of inherited character and of liberal-minded nurture, who had been encouraged by their parents to share in the more robust studies of their brothers. Of such were Elizabeth Carter (1717-1806), Mrs. Trimmer (1741-1810), Mrs. Barbauld (1743-1825), Hannah More (1763-1833), Mrs. Marcet (1769-1858). These all devoted their best powers to the production of books for the young, therefore stand foremost as preparing the way for the awakening of just discontent in the generations that followed.



## CHAPTER II.

### FIRST STAGES OF THE MOVEMENT.

#### *Preliminary Statement.*

(1) **FREEHOLDERS.**—The earliest statute regulating the election of Knights of the Shire (7 Henry IV., c. 15) expressly mentions *suitors* as persons qualified to be electors, suitors being freemen who owed suit to the County Court.

The next statute on the subject (10 Henry IV., c. 2) uses the word *People (gentz demeurant et resiantz)* dwelling in the county and having freehold of forty shillings.

The 7th and 8th William III., c. 25, uses the words "all *freeholders* there and then present." The Act 18 George II., c. 18, says no *person* shall vote without having a freehold estate of forty shillings.

(2) **FREEMEN.**—By George III., c. 15, *persons* claiming as freemen to vote must have been admitted to the freedom of the city twelve months before they can be admitted to vote. The qualifications which admitted to the freedom of cities varied greatly from city to city, but nearly all were as applicable to women as men.

§ 4. *The Reform Act of 1832.*

The old electors might have been women. No bar stayed them—in law. Only the bar of non-user that had been drawn across their path by custom during the long period of discouragement. Such was the status of women in regard to the electoral law when the Reform Act of 1832 enacted the first statutory disability. The seed of the Women's Suffrage agitation lay in that one short word "male" introduced into 19 and 20 of 2 W. IV., c. 45 (1832).

That one word gave the sanction of law to the custom which had been for two centuries insidiously working to press women back from all interest or care for public duties. In that word the prevalent idea as to the relations of women to public life reached the culminating point. The well-known passage in Mr. James Mill's celebrated *Essay on Government*<sup>1</sup> concisely expresses the popular view now reflected by the House of Commons.

"One thing is pretty clear, that all those individuals whose interests are indisputably included in those of other individuals may be struck off from political rights without inconvenience. In this light may be viewed all children up to a certain age, whose interests are involved in those of their parents; in this light also women may be regarded, the interest of almost all of whom is involved either in that of their fathers or that of their husbands."

This passage drew forth the vigorous protest of

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Supplement, p. 500.

William Thompson, who in 1825 published his *Appeal of one-half the Human Race*,<sup>1</sup> with an introductory letter to Mrs. Wheeler, at whose suggestion it was written. This was the first piece of literature written with a direct bearing on legislation on this question—it is one of the ironies of history that the earliest publication in defence of Women's Suffrage should have been called forth by the father of the future author of the "*Subjection of Women*," and that the first legislation excluding women should have been encouraged by the philosophy of the man whose son was to be the champion of their restitution.

The disabling process thus set up soon spread further: the first Parliament elected under the Reform Act showed its representative character by introducing the same restrictive word "male" into the enfranchising clauses of the Municipal Corporation Act of 1835, by which the various local charters, with their various generic franchises, were reduced to one uniform male franchise. Thus from those who had not, was taken even that which they had.<sup>2</sup>

#### § 5. *The Avowal of Discontent.*

However much statute law might tamper with ancient rights and Parliament treat women as politi-

<sup>1</sup> The full title of this book was, "Appeal from one-half the Human Race, Women, against the pretensions of the other half, Men, to retain them in political, and thence in civil and domestic slavery, in reply to a paragraph of Mr. Mill's celebrated article on Government."

<sup>2</sup> Another example of a similar character was given two years later, when the right of widows to a share of one-third their husbands' estate was barred, so that they only became entitled thereto if so expressed by his will. 314 W. IV., c. 105 (29th August 1835).

cally of no independent standing, socially they remained untouched, they caught up the prevailing enthusiasms, they felt the pulsations of the excitement over the political questions which filled the air. Many readers will remember—as does the present writer—to have heard their mothers or grandmothers speak of the eager excitement they shared with husbands and brothers about the great liberating measures of the “thirties” and “forties.”

Writing in 1870 Mrs. John Mylne remarks: “In my young days it was considered rude to talk politics to ladies. To introduce them at a dinner party was a hint for us to retire and leave the gentlemen to such conversation and their bottle. But the excitement that prevailed all over the country at the prospect of the Reform Bill of 1832 broke down these distinctions, while the new and, as it seemed to us, splendid idea of a ‘hustings at the Cross of Edinburgh’ drove its inhabitants, both male and female, half frantic with delight. I caught the infection, and as soon as ever I understood the benefits expected from a £10 franchise I began to wish that female householders should have it too, thinking it only fair play they should.”

In her little book, *A Plea for Women*, published in 1843, Mrs. Hugo Reid gives us a glimpse of the “curious and inconsistent ideas prevalent about the civil duties for which women are fit or not fit. . . . The necessary property qualification admits her to vote for an East India director, nor have we heard the faintest hint of any inconvenience resulting from the

practice. What great and obvious difference there is between voting for the governors of India and those of England—so great and so obvious as to make the one a matter of course for women, the other an absurdity which cannot be so much as named without exciting the most contemptuous laughter—we confess we do not very clearly see. Nor is it alone in the government of that foreign country that women equally with the other sex are allowed a voice. In the local government of our own country we often see women invested with a vote for some one or other of the public servants.”

The daughter of Mr. Joseph Pease of Darlington—(Mrs. Pease Nichol, who died in 1897 in her ninety-first year)—was her father’s devoted secretary and fellow-labourer in the great movements in which he took prominent part—Catholic Emancipation, Abolition of Tests, Abolition of Slave Trade. She attended the Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840—an occasion ever memorable in the Women’s Suffrage movement as giving the impetus to the first Convention for Women’s Suffrage in the United States, that Convention being the direct result of the refusal of the Anti-Slavery Convention in London to receive as delegates the duly accredited ladies sent from the United States.<sup>1</sup>

The Anti-Corn Law agitation was, however, still more educational for Englishwomen. In his *History of the Anti-Corn Law League*,<sup>2</sup> Mr. Prentice says, writing of

<sup>1</sup> See for full account, *History of Women’s Suffrage*, by Mrs. Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, vol. i. chap. iii. (New York, 1881).

<sup>2</sup> Prentice’s *History of the Anti-Corn Law League*, vol. i. p. 170.

the year 1840, "Another influential agency had now its origin. . . . It was found that wives, mothers, and daughters took a deep interest in the question which so much engrossed the attention of sons, husbands and brothers." The great tea in the Corn Exchange, Manchester, in October of that year, was the beginning of a co-operation in which women rendered effective service. The Anti-Corn Law circular of 30th December 1841 says: "The women of Manchester have set a noble example to their sisters throughout the country. They have already obtained more than 50,000 signatures to the memorial adopted at the Corn Exchange. The ladies of Bolton, Wigan and Stockport are engaged in canvassing their respective towns." The services thus rendered by women drew forth the encomiums of Mr. Frederick Bastiat, the French economist, in the following enthusiastic terms:<sup>1</sup> "I doubt not that the reader is surprised, and perhaps scandalized to see women appearing in these stormy debates. Woman seems to lose her force in risking herself in this scientific *mêlée* bristling with the barbarous words, *tariffs, salaries, profits, monopolies*. What is there in common between dry dissertations and that ethereal being, that angel of the soft affections, that poetical and devoted nature, whose destiny it is solely to love and to please, to sympathize and to console? . . . .

"She has comprehended that the effort of the League is a course of justice and reparation towards the suffering classes; she has comprehended that almsgiving is not the only form of charity. We are ready to succour

<sup>1</sup> Prentice's *History of the Anti-Corn Law League*, vol. i. p. 171.

the unfortunate, say they, but that is no reason why the law should make unfortunates. We are willing to feed those who are hungry, to clothe those who are cold, but we applaud efforts which have for their object the removal of the barriers which interfere between clothing and nakedness, between subsistence and starvation ;” and he concludes with these words, “If an atmosphere of lead weighs down our social life, perhaps the cause is to be sought in the fact that woman has not yet taken possession of the mission which Providence has assigned her.”

The Anti-Corn Law agitation was the nursery in which many a girl of that generation learned to know how closely public questions concerned her. At the great meeting held in Covent Garden in January 1845, when the key-note of the speeches was “*qualify—qualify,*” as voters, Mr. Richard Cobden said, “There are many ladies, I am happy to say, present; now it is a very anomalous and singular fact that they cannot vote themselves and yet that they have power of conferring votes upon other people.” He wished they had the franchise, and went on to say how a lady had come to them in Manchester to enquire how she could convey a freehold qualification to her son.

Nor was Mr. Cobden the only prominent upholder of the Anti-Corn Law movement whose sympathies were in favour of women sharing political power. So long before as 1832 Mr. William Johnston Fox (M.P. for Oldham), in an article entitled “A Political and Social Anomaly,” which appeared in the *Monthly Repository* just after the passing of the Reform Act, commented on

the "egregious anomaly" that in the constitutional process of events a woman would become vested with the supreme political authority, and yet women were denied the simplest political function. "In the common opinion of common statesmen, the fitness of woman to vote for an individual's elevation to the temporary dignity of a legislator in the House of Commons is a mere joke; yet her naming scores of persons legislators for life, and all their heirs legislators too, through all generations, is an essential portion of that ancestral wisdom under which we live. . . . In truth this mystery is hard to swallow, and warily must a loyal subject steer his course so as neither to be convicted of constructive treason by the Tories, nor ridiculed even by Radicals for the extravagances of his theories." Then after further criticism of the anomalies of the case he concludes: "In claiming science, politics, philosophy and all the higher regions of thought for himself and warning off intrusion by placarding them with the word *unfeminine*, he has deprived himself of the best sympathy, the most efficient aid, the mightiest stimulus and the noblest reward of his own most honourable toils. All this is very foolish and inconsistent, but legislation and Society are full of anomalies."

When in later years the legislature was asked to repeal this egregious anomaly, the vote of the leader of the Anti-Corn Law Bill, Mr. C. P. Villiers, was always recorded in favour of such repeal in the House of Commons.

To this period belongs what appears to be the earliest leaflet printed in favour of Women's Suffrage—a quaint



little slip of yellow paper of which a facsimile is here given, from a copy preserved by Miss Ashurst Biggs.

NEVER will the nations of the earth be well governed, until both sexes, as well as all parties, are fairly represented, and have an influence, a voice, and a hand in the enactment and administration of the laws. One would think, the sad mismanagement of the affairs of our own country, should, in all modesty, lead us MEN to doubt our own capacity for the task of governing a nation, or even a State, alone; and to apprehend that we need other qualities in our public councils—qualities that may be found in the female portion of our race. If woman be the complement of man, we may surely venture the intimation, that all our social transactions will be incomplete, or otherwise imperfect, until they have been guided alike by the wisdom of each sex. The wise, virtuous, gentle mothers of a State or nation, might contribute as much to the good order, the peace, the thrift of the body politic, as they severally do to the well-being of their families, which for the most part, all know, is more than the fathers do.

Leaflet from Anne Knight of Quiet House, Chelmsford—circa 1847.

This leaflet was one of a packet sent to her mother, Mrs. Joseph Biggs (then of Leicester) by Anne Knight of Quiet House, Chelmsford—an aged Quaker lady of strong political opinions. “I wish,” she writes in the letter which accompanied the packet (dated in April 1847), “that talented philanthropists in England would come forward in this critical juncture of our nation’s affairs and insist on the right of suffrage for all men and all women unstained with crime . . . and take the liberty of requesting thy opinion as well as hearty co-operation in the demand for justice to us all, whether gowned or coated, in order that all may have a voice in the affairs of their country at a time when all interests are roused and it is important that ‘every man should do his duty, and every woman also.’”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the chapter, contributed by Caroline Ashurst Biggs to the *American History of Women’s Suffrage* on the movement in Great Britain, it is related that Anne Knight assisted in founding the

The next sign of the leaven which was steadily working, was an article in the *Westminster Review* of July 1851 on the Enfranchisement of Women, suggested by the Women's Rights Convention which had been held in Worcester, Massachusetts, on 23rd and 24th of the previous October. This article was reprinted as a pamphlet and widely circulated by the Women's Suffrage Society in 1868,<sup>1</sup> with the name of the writer, Mrs. John Stuart Mill. The article concludes with mention of a petition of women, agreed to by a public meeting at Sheffield, claiming the elective franchise, and presented to the House of Lords by the Earl of Carlisle on 13th February 1851.

In 1855 the leavening process appeared in a lucid, able pamphlet, *The Right of Women to Exercise the Elective Franchise*, by "Justitia" (published by Chapman & Hall); later that pamphlet was reprinted by the National Society for Women's Suffrage with the name of the author, Mrs. Henry Davis Pochin.

In the following extract thence, summing up actual evils and possible benefits, the reason and the justification of the new movement may be clearly read.

"The evils of the present system with the corresponding benefit of the advocated reforms, may be shortly summed up as follows:—

"Sheffield Female Political Association," which, at a meeting held in the Democratic Temperance Hotel, Sheffield, 26th February 1851, adopted the first address on suffrage formulated by women in England. *History of Women's Suffrage*, vol. iii. p. 837.

<sup>1</sup> It was afterwards published in Mr. J. S. Mill's *Dissertations and Discussions*.

*"Evils of the Present System.*

"1st. The introduction of an altered principle into the Constitution, by the recognition of a physical condition as a test of moral fitness, and its injurious effect as a precedent.

"2nd. The depreciation of the feminine intellect in the estimation of the general public, and the deterioration of self-respect and self-reliance which it engenders in the feminine sex.

"3rd. The tendency which it has to produce contraction of mind by condemning women to the exclusive contemplation of things on a small scale, without reference to the relative proportions such a scale may bear to those of greater magnitude.

"4th. The defective education which it superinduces.

*"Benefits of the Advocated Reforms.*

"The abolition of this absurd, unjustifiable and injurious principle, and the withdrawal of the legislative sanction from the precedent which it affords.

"The opportunity afforded to the feminine intellect of finding its true level, and vindicating itself from the charges of inferiority daily urged against it.

"The opening out of new paths of action and thought, the greater chance of forming more correct, enlightened and tolerant opinions; from having more general data to reason upon, and more comprehensive modes of action to study.

"The more liberal and enlightened education which would be rendered necessary.

"5th. The partiality shown to one sex over the other, when the interests of the two sexes come into collision or are not identified, and the feeling of insecurity and injustice to which this partiality gives rise.

"6th. The present arrangement is an undue interference with the right of property, the hardships being aggravated by the difficulties which women meet with in its acquisition."

"The greater likelihood of all interests being fairly considered and represented, and the greater confidence which will be felt by all classes of subjects, on being assured of the strict impartiality of the Government.

"In the proposed reform unrepresented property would become represented, irrespective of all considerations of sex in its possessor, and without interference with conjugal rights."





MISS BECKER—I.

## PART II.

### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES AND REMINISCENCES OF MISS BECKER.

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#### CHAPTER III.

##### MISS BECKER.

##### § 6. *Introductory.*

THERE are times when the story of one life is so interwoven with the story of its time, when the thought and conduct of one individual soul is so typical of the life of its generation, that to tell the story of the one, is to tell that of the other.

So it is with the story of the Women's Suffrage agitation in Great Britain, and the life-story of Miss Becker, the woman who will stand forth to after times as the leader whose personality was impressed on its early work, whose forethought and judgment moulded its policy.

One must stand in a sense apart, at a certain distance from events and persons that one has known intimately near, to be able to marshal them in clear procession with due subordination of the parts, and to show truly the stature of those who have taken part in the procession.

That the task is not an easy one, no one can feel more keenly than the present writer, who can but give her best endeavour, out of the huge mass of letters, minutes, circulars, journals, pamphlets, and speeches, to seize on those points which will most clearly and effectually delineate the character of the movement and of the workers therein.

It seems remarkable that we should look in vain in the memorable petition of 1866 for the name which was soon to become the personification of the movement to the world. Yet so it was—the knowledge of that petition had not penetrated to her quiet home in Lancashire. “There ought to have been 1500 names,” she used to say; “mine ought to have been there.”

However, it was not long before the meeting of the Social Science Association, held that year in Manchester, brought her into touch with the work which responded to the aspirations of her life.

Miss Becker was one of the audience when Mrs. Bodichon read her paper, “On Reasons for the Enfranchisement of Women,” before the Association, on 6th October 1866.

### § 7. *Her Young Days.*

Lydia Ernestine Becker was born in Cooper Street, Manchester, on 24th February 1827—the eldest of the fifteen children of Hannibal Leigh Becker and Mary Duncuft. Her mother was of an old Lancashire stock, her father was of German descent: his father, Ernest Hannibal Becker, being a native of Thuringia, who had



come to England as a young man and lived to an advanced age at Foxdenton Hall, where all his children were born.

Notwithstanding the strain of German descent Miss Becker was thoroughly a Lancashire woman: her life was spent in Lancashire; her family affections all centred there. The Beckers moved when Lydia was but a child to Altham, near Accrington, a large house on rising ground, with a fine view of the Pendle range, and later to Reddish. Their old house, and indeed the whole of Cooper Street, is now occupied by huge warehouses.

In reference to Miss Becker's early days one of her sisters writes:—

“Upon myself her influence has been very strong, and I owe to her much of my intellectual life. Perhaps the quiet way in which our youth was spent brought us into closer contact than would have been the case otherwise.

“We lived in the country and were thrown much together, as we were almost entirely educated at home. Lydia was always a great reader, and always remembered what she read, so that she was the universal referee when information was wanted, no matter what the subject. She had a wonderful way, too, of getting at the kernel of a book in a very short time. Without reading it through she seized on the salient points, and knew more about it in an hour than I should have done after careful plodding through. She went for a long visit to Germany about 1844. This was a great event in our quiet lives.”

The following letter to her father, from his cousin, Dr. Hermann Piutti, Principal of a Hydropathic establishment in the beautiful Thuringen Wald, where Lydia paid a long visit, shows the impression the young girl made on her German relatives. To one who only knew her in the after years of her public life, this letter is full of characteristic traits. The weakness in her back referred to was never wholly eradicated, and she was never able to make progress in music from the consequent want of sufficient force in the fingers. The same weakness showed itself also in her handwriting, which had a peculiar sort of unfinished look from her inability to grasp her pen firmly—and every one in the Suffrage office knew that Miss Becker could not fold circulars with anything like neatness, much as she insisted on every packet that went forth being neatly and accurately folded, as became documents issued from a lady's office. Her love of chess, referred to by Dr. Piutti, continued her favourite recreation throughout her life and beguiled many weary hours in her last months.

“ELGERSBURG, *Feb. 28th, 1845.*

“DEAR HANNIBAL,—I ought to have written to you and your dear wife long ago and to have expressed my gratitude for the friendship you have shown and the pleasure you have caused to me and my wife in confiding your dear Lydia to our care for some time. She is, I am happy to say, very much improved in health and vigour; a weakness in the back, which doubtless existed for some years, and having rendered her weak and unable to use her bodily strength, seems much better, though

not quite subsided. Lydia is grown tall and stout, and you will be quite surprised to see what a lady-like figure she will be when you meet her again. She is fond of learning and of everything that touches mental faculties and clever understanding; she is sharp and keen in her intellect, clever in judging matters, fond of knowledge, has an excellent memory, and her passion for reading facilitates the study of the German language at present very much, as she is now so far advanced as to read books in German easily. All that is mechanical gives her more trouble to do, although whenever she does it she does it well, viz., writing in German.

“She plays sometimes on the piano very nicely and agreeably, though I think the weakness of her back will for the present prevent that practice which is wanted to carry it on to a higher degree of ability. She began drawing and painting flowers upon china and did it remarkably well. We sometimes have a game of chess, in which I am frequently the loser.

“Lydia is the best tempered girl I ever saw, which principally and partly arises from her activity of mind, which is always busy, time never hanging heavy on her hands. She is always interested for things around her and does all she can to increase her knowledge of things.

“Before she leaves Germany, which I trust will be a long while yet, I hope she will see Leipzig, Dresden, and perhaps Berlin.—Always yours most sincerely,

“HERMANN PIUTTIL”

Continuing her reminiscences of this period, her sister, Miss Esther Becker, writes that her uncle Leigh

went to fetch her home towards the end of the year 1845.

“A great bonfire was kindled on their arrival at Reddish. Lydia had grown very stout and she had a *very* warm grey cloak. This makes me sure it must have been cold weather when they came, but I find no precise date.

“Soon after her return she began to give us lessons in German and, I think, other branches.

“As a teacher her powers were remarkable; she seemed to go right down to the bottom of things. It all came out so clear to one's mind.

“Our life at Reddish was a quiet and uneventful one,—in the midst of lovely scenery and beautiful flowers.

“The agitations in the political life of the period to some extent affected us. I remember the excitement when it was thought the Chartists might find their way to our peaceful valley, also the year of revolutions, 1848, when Louis Philippe landed in England as ‘Mr. Smith.’ And the stormy discussions connected with the Anti-Corn Law League were reproduced in miniature in our juvenile circle!

“Doubtless Lydia, with her quick intellect and more advanced age, took an intelligent interest in these matters; to me they were somewhat unintelligible!

“In 1850 we removed from Reddish to Altham, an interval of thirteen years having elapsed since we left it. The house was finely situated in view of Pendle Hill. The drives and walks about presented great attractions to us, as the scenery was on a bolder, grander scale than that round our pretty valley at Reddish.

“Lydia entered with zest into the study of the plants of the neighbourhood. I remember her pleasure at finding some which were new to her,—*Primula farinosa* and *Pinguicula* on Pendle, a rare sort of geranium in Symonstone Lane, etc. She joined a class for painting in water colours, and though she always depreciated her own efforts we have a collection of very beautiful sketches done from nature. She also executed some good copies,—interior of Milan Cathedral, etc.

“In 1862 (I think) she won the gold medal from the Horticultural Society of S. Kensington for the best collection of dried plants made within a year. She adopted the plan of drying the plants very quickly under great pressure and in heat. The press she used was made of transverse pieces of wood, which allowed the air to pass through. She used bricks covered with brown paper as weights. Her specimens preserved their colour beautifully, and she fastened them on to the paper with gum tragacanth—no ugly strips disfiguring them. The competition was open to the United Kingdom. Her pleasure in botany was intense and her knowledge of it thorough and complete. She had some interesting correspondence with the celebrated naturalist Mr. Charles Darwin in connection with some facts she had observed in the course of her studies.

“Our mother died in 1855 and two years later our eldest brother, Ernest. This last was so terrible a trial to Lydia that she never could bear any reference to it. Other troubles, many and bitter, followed. About 1865 we went to live in Manchester.

"She attended the meeting there of the British Association, an era in her intellectual life."

### § 8. *Her Early Work.*

Miss Becker's first piece of authorship, *Botany for Novices*,<sup>1</sup> fully bears out her sister's remarks as to her power of clear explanation. It is surprising that so clear and explicit a little book should have disappeared so entirely from circulation. It was written from pure love of her subject. "Lydia knew and loved every little flower that grew," as an old friend and companion of her girlhood expressed it, when speaking of her life at Altham. In the midst of the anxieties of her political work in London, she found her best refreshment in a run down to the gardens and conservatories at Kew. Visitors to the office could always know when Miss Becker was in residence by the flowering plants she always gathered round her—in the little house, 155 Shrewsbury Street, Manchester, where she removed on the death of her father, the little conservatory was her constant pleasure. Flowers were her delight. Astronomy had the next largest share of her studies in her pre-suffrage days, and a little treatise on *Elementary Astronomy*, a companion volume to the *Botany for Novices*, was written by her, but never published; probably the circulation of her first venture did not encourage expenditure on another. The MS. has been preserved by the friend already referred to, and shows her grasp of the subject and her descriptive power.

<sup>1</sup>Published by Remington, Rugby, 1864, under her initials L. E. B.

Whatever the unfulfilled hopes of her books she was ever eager to arouse others to the enjoyment she had found in scientific pursuits, and on the return of the family to live in Manchester she devised a plan for a Ladies' Literary Society. Here again she met with disappointment, the number of members with which it started being much short of her hopes. What the little Society might have eventually grown to, had it continued to receive her undivided attention, it would be useless to speculate—meantime those efforts were pointing her out as the natural leader of the new movement now drawing thoughtful women all over the land to join in one common purpose.

Her mental attitude at that time may be estimated by the address, given by her as President of the "Manchester Ladies' Literary Society" at its opening meeting in the Royal Institution, Mosley Street, on 30th January 1867.

#### ADDRESS.

LADIES,—The Society we are met to-day to inaugurate is designed to supply a want which must have been experienced by many who interest themselves in the pursuit of knowledge. We all know how much more pleasant and easy any study appears, when pursued in common with others of kindred tastes; and how much more interesting any new fact becomes when we are sure of a sympathizing audience to whom we may impart it; who are ready to listen to any observations we may make, and to communicate to us any knowledge they may possess, which bears upon the subject.

Those of our number who have been in the habit of collecting plants or insects well know the pleasure of announcing, or receiving the news of the discovery, of some rare variety; and

will agree that a much greater amount of positive knowledge, if it must be shut up for ever within our own breasts, would not afford the same kind of enjoyment as that found in sharing its pleasures and surprises with those around us. Should there be any among us who have not yet experienced this pleasure, they will, I trust, learn it through their connection with us, and thus add another to such agreeable episodes as brighten the path of our daily lives.

The necessity for some common ground on which all interested in intellectual pursuits may meet, has been so strongly felt, that there exist all over the country institutions and societies, devoted either to literature and philosophy in general, or to the cultivation of special branches of knowledge. The efforts of these societies conduce not only to the delight and edification of their members, but by the stimulus they have given to individual research, have led to the making of great discoveries with regard to the hidden laws of nature. These discoveries have been applied practically towards facilitating the means of communication and locomotion, and in countless other ways, and a general amelioration of the hardships and discomforts of life has taken place, as a direct consequence of the encouragement of scientific research.

But practical advantage of this kind, though the inevitable result of better acquaintance with the laws that rule the world in which we live, is not the object with which scientific societies were founded. They were designed to promote the discovery and the spread of truth. By truth I do not mean any mysterious abstraction, but true assertions respecting matters of fact, and true theories, that is, theories consistent with the appearances they are designed to explain. The pleasure the mind derives from the discovery and contemplation of truth of this kind is one of the highest and purest emotions of our nature. It is an end in itself, and for the attainment of this end, men have cheerfully devoted the best years of their lives to patient and incessant study, for no other fee or reward than the delight of solving the mysterious enigmas presented by the living universe. These high priests of science labour, and invite us to enter into the fruit of their labours; they gather and spread the feast, and call upon all to



partake of it. The qualification for partaking of this feast consists not so much in amount of information, as in taste or inclination. Of course our enjoyment is heightened in direct proportion to the store of previous knowledge we bring to the board; but Wisdom is liberal to all her children, and has milk for babes, as well as strong meat for men.

In this city there are many societies established for the advancement of science, in each of the two ways in which science can be said to advance. There is the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, which aims at advancing science by encouraging actually new discoveries; and which numbers among its members men eminent in the ranks of those whose efforts carry the lantern of research into hitherto unexplored regions. With less ambitious aims exists the Manchester Scientific Students' Association, whose professed object is the advancement of knowledge among its own members, by mutual encouragement in the study of what has been actually attained in science, rather than with any expectation of surprising the world by new discoveries. These, and other societies with similar aims, fill a most useful place, and all must wish for them a long continuance of prosperity.

But these institutions have a deficiency, which deficiency we are now trying to remedy. They do not throw open such opportunities as they afford for acquiring knowledge, freely to all who desire it; they draw an arbitrary line among scientific students, and say to our half of the human race—you shall not enter into the advantages we have to offer—you shall not enjoy the facilities we possess of cultivating the faculties and tastes with which you may be endowed; and should any of you, in spite of this discouragement, reach such a measure of attainments as would entitle one of us to look for the honour of membership or fellowship in any learned body, we will not, by conferring such distinctions upon any of you, recognize your right to occupy your minds with such matters at all.

Under these circumstances, the only course for the excluded persons seems to be—to try what can be done by forming a society of their own; and the cordial support which the idea has received from those directly interested, forms not only its complete justi-

fication, but is the best earnest of the success for which we hope. It has also received such assistance and encouragement from scientific men, and others, as proves conclusively that the apparently harsh and arbitrary exclusiveness of the scientific societies of Manchester, proceeds from no deliberate desire that we should pass our lives in ignorance.

It has not been thought desirable to specify any branch of study to which the deliberations of the society shall be directed, but to allow ourselves free range over all the subjects embraced in the general name of intellectual pursuits.

Some persons may be tempted to smile at the idea of a number of ladies, whom they cannot suppose to be very learned, occupying their minds with such subjects, for instance, as the Origin of Species, or the Antiquity of Man ; the full understanding of which demands an amount of knowledge and experience in scientific investigations to which, I fear, none of us can lay claim.

The implied censure would be well deserved were our professed object to throw any new light on these difficult questions, but as we meet simply to inform ourselves on what has been discovered and propounded respecting them, the reproach of ignorance cannot be justly employed as an argument to dissuade us from endeavouring to gain information. We believe there is no method so effective of fixing in the mind the information that is imparted to us, as that of a discussion, in which every one is invited to ask any question that occurs, or to state unreservedly any opinion, along with the grounds on which it is entertained. We therefore determine to institute and encourage such discussions, and if the result should be, to prove to ourselves that we know very little of what we are talking about, that will surely be the best of reasons for trying to remedy the defect as fast as we can.

Besides the addition to our store of positive knowledge, there is another important advantage to be derived from scientific study, namely, the cultivation of those habits of accuracy in speech and thought, which are so absolutely necessary to its successful prosecution. One of the first lessons which a scientific student learns is, that he must not take a mere impression on his own mind, however powerful, as representing a positive fact, until he has

carefully verified its accuracy by comparing it with the results of observation, and is prepared to state exactly on what grounds he entertains it. And when he hears an assertion made, he will pause, before accepting it as true, for the mental enquiry whether the asserter is likely to be personally acquainted with the fact he alleges, and if not, what are his probable sources of information. On the answer to these expressed or unexpressed queries, will depend the measure of credence to be given to the assertion in question. A reverence for accuracy of this kind would arrest many a baseless and painful rumour; and if it be the tendency of scientific investigation to conduce to such a tone of mind, the most inveterate sceptic as to the benefits of intellectual culture for women, might be induced to confess, that it is better that maids, old and young, should graduate in the School for Science, rather than in the School for Scandal.

Another good habit learned at scientific gatherings is, that of listening with patience and courtesy to opinions differing widely from our own. Within the limits prescribed by the rules we, in common with similar societies, have adopted, there is room for much divergence of thought, and we hope for, and desire to encourage the expression of, all the various views that exist on the subject chosen for discussion. Nothing can be more dull than a debate in which the speakers are all of one mind; therefore, we hope that on any subject on which it is possible to hold two opinions somebody will always be found ready to advocate the other one. Difference of opinion does not imply disrespect for the judgment of those from whom we dissent. It must have occurred at times to all of us, to find ourselves at issue, on some point or other, with persons to whom we look up, as being, on the whole, wiser or more learned than ourselves.

One of the greatest benefits which intellectual pursuits bring in their train, is that of affording a peaceful neutral ground, in which the mind can take refuge from the petty cares and annoyances of life, or even find diversion from more serious troubles. Like prudent speculators, who keep part of their capital in the funds, those who place the sources of a portion of their income of enjoyment in some pursuit wholly unconnected with their personal

affairs, will find that they have an interest which is perfectly safe amid the chances and changes of life. I do not for a moment maintain that intellectual pursuits can afford consolation in sorrow, for this we must look elsewhere ; but they are undoubtedly capable of giving solace and diversion to the mind, which might otherwise dwell too long on the gloomy side of things ; and of beguiling the tedium of enforced solitude, or of confinement to a sick-room. For an instance of this, we need look no further than to the experience of the illustrious naturalist who has honoured us by sending us a paper for this, our first meeting. Some of the curious and interesting observations, to which we shall presently listen, were made when he was a prisoner, night and day, to one room ; and we cannot doubt that the occupation they afforded him, not only served to lighten the weary hours, but occasioned him an amount of positive enjoyment which one less gifted might have failed to secure, though at liberty to participate in the ordinary pleasures of social life.

Such an example should encourage us to go and do likewise. Many particulars respecting the commonest of our wild plants, animals, and insects, are yet imperfectly understood ; and any one of us who might select one of these creatures, and begin a series of patient observations on its habits, manner of feeding, of taking care of its young, of communicating with its kind, of guarding against approaching danger ; on its disposition and temper, and the difference in character between two individuals of the same species, would find such occupation, not only exceedingly entertaining, but if the observations were carefully and accurately recorded as they were noted, the result would be something of real, if not of great, scientific value. Gold is gold—whether our amount be an ingot or a spangle ; and we need but to open our eyes, and carefully observe what is passing around us, to add perpetually to our store of the pure gold of knowledge.

No one should be deterred from either making or reporting original observations, by a feeling that they are trifling or unimportant. Nothing that is real is considered insignificant by the naturalist, and observations, apparently the most trifling, have led to results which have turned the whole current of scientific

thought. What could be a more trifling circumstance than the fall of an apple from a tree? yet the appearances presented contained the key that unlocked the mystery of the planetary movements. The law of gravitation maintains the stability of the universe, yet the fall of a pin to the ground is as truly a manifestation of this force as the movement of the earth in its orbit. With the sentiment of the poet in our hearts—

“That very law which moulds a tear,  
And bids it trickle from its source,  
That law preserves the earth a sphere,  
And holds the planets in their course,”

we shall never regard any appearance as trifling, which the tremendous forces of nature concur to produce.

How seemingly unimportant are the movements of insects, creeping in and out of flowers in their search for the nectar on which they feed. If we saw a man spending his time in watching them, and in noting their flitting with curious eyes, we might be excused for imagining that he was amusing himself by idling an hour luxuriously in observing things which, though curious, were trifling. But how mistaken might we be in such an assumption! For these little winged messengers bear to the mind of the philosophical naturalist, tidings of mysteries hitherto unrevealed, and as Newton saw the law of gravitation in the fall of the apple, Darwin found, in the connection between flies and flowers, some of the most important facts which support the theory he has promulgated respecting the modification of specific forms in animated beings.

It is true we are not Darwins nor Newtons, and cannot expect to make surprising discoveries, but we may be sure that these, and all other philosophers, have found an exquisite pleasure in tracing the workings of nature, independently of searching to establish any theory; and this enjoyment may be had by all who follow, however humbly, in their footsteps. And if we wish to understand their theories, it is consoling to find our attention directed at the outset, not to seemingly dry disquisitions, full of hard words, but to loved and familiar natural objects; to humble bees sucking clover flowers, to beetles swimming with their wings, to primroses

and crimson flax, to grotesque orchids with their wild, weird beauty, setting traps for unwitting insects, and making them pay for their feast of honey by being the bearers of love tokens from one flower to another ; to be sent, in fact, to the Book of Nature, and bidden to read its wondrous stories with our own eyes.

One of the special advantages that this society offers us, is that of being an arena for the communication of any interesting fact we may have observed, and a storehouse, in which will accumulate the results of our labours. Many curious facts in natural history are constantly coming under the notice, at least of such as reside or visit in the country, but the interest or curiosity roused at the moment is apt to pass away, if we have no persons to whom to communicate the facts we have observed. But they become a source of perpetual interest if we are united with others in the prosecution of such studies, if we are sure of a sympathizing audience to whom we may impart them, and if we know that they will be recorded and preserved as a contribution to the sum of what is known on the subject.

I have attempted to give a few of the considerations which seemed to render the formation of such an association as this desirable, and which have enabled us to bring it up to the present point. Our infant society is now fairly started in life, with every possible encouragement to hope for a prosperous career. We begin with a goodly number of members ; we have funds in hand for our present requirements, and have been thereby enabled to lay the foundation of our proposed library by acquiring a title to the valuable publications for this year, of the Ray Society.

The Council of the Royal Institution has liberally accorded to us the gratuitous use of a most convenient room for our meetings ; and several eminent men among the Manchester Literati have promised to come and read papers for our instruction, on which we shall have the opportunity of expressing our opinions, and of asking of the author any questions his communications may suggest to our minds.

We are met to-day to listen to a paper by one of the most eminent naturalists in the world,<sup>1</sup> sent to us with his good wishes

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Charles Darwin.

for our success. Beginning under such favourable auspices, we may hope for a series of agreeable and instructive gatherings, to secure which end we shall, I am sure, all be desirous of contributing to the extent of our several abilities. Any of our members who may feel disposed so to do, will, we hope, favour us with original papers, which we shall always be most happy to receive, while those who are not desirous of being writers, will fill the no less useful and important office of listeners, and perhaps of critics of what is advanced. In one way or other, all can do good service, and it only needs a continuation of the support and goodwill hitherto displayed by its members, to render the Manchester Ladies' Literary Society an institution to which we shall feel it a pride and a pleasure to belong.

*January 30th, 1867.*

§ 9. *Extracts from Correspondence.*

Miss Becker never wrote anything in haste. A certain irritability of nature betrayed itself at times in a hasty word, her impatience of fussiness sometimes showed itself too plainly, but she never allowed herself to show hastiness or impatience in writing. Her letters were written with great care and consideration. They show her in her real strength, in her statesmanlike toleration and indifference to petty things. Her wealth of sympathy with suffering and wrong, gave her insight into character; her massive force of purpose made her strong to endure and made pettiness of thought an impossibility for her.

Her standard of work was very high, and she exacted the best work from herself and from those under her. She fully gauged their capacities for work, and knew

what should be expected of each. Her method was to leave each responsible for the work entrusted to her, and they knew they could rely absolutely on her justice and her appreciation of work well done. But if she met with anything like deceit or underhand dealing, she showed no toleration.

These were the qualities that drew the strong to her. The fussy and the self-opinionated shrank from her. The weak might feel overpowered in her presence, the over-zealous might be disconcerted by her cool reception of their zeal, but those who had power to appreciate power appreciated her, according to the measure of their own power.

From the day when she accepted the invitation of the Manchester Committee to become its Secretary, her life, so far as the public are concerned, became identified with the movement in which she thenceforth lived and moved and had her being, until the last fatal journey. Of the tragic close, so terrible for all who loved her, it will be best to speak when that time is reached, and let these reminiscences close with a few extracts from her correspondence illustrating the character of the writer and the then condition of public opinion.

The first extract gives a sort of confession of her political faith.

"I have never doubted which was the party of progress, but I certainly think that on our question the Tory and Liberal have been till very lately, if they are not now, so helplessly in the rear that there was not much to choose between them, and I do not believe that the Liberal party as a party care a straw



for the interests and wishes of women, or will stir a step to do them justice. With this firm conviction, their profession of liberalism and desire for government founded on popular consent and the principles of justice sound a mockery and command none of my sympathy.

“That which is a ‘great principle’ applied to men becomes a ‘crotchet’ when women claim the benefit of it. The Liberal party is more tractable—that is all, and a part of it gives us a mild kind of half-contemptuous approval. Mr. Mill, your husband and a few others are in earnest in trying to remedy the wrong, but not so the bulk of the party. However, I expect a different spirit will come over them soon.”

Speaking of the attitude of women happy in their own surroundings:—

“You say rightly that many women who are happy in their own position are apt to forget that others are not so fortunate—yet it is in truth the *happy* women who should be most anxious to devote themselves to our cause. However miserable a woman may be, if she makes that the ground of agitating for an amelioration of the condition of the sex—though she is undoubtedly right in so doing, yet it may be said that self-seeking is at the bottom of her efforts. But when women who have nothing to ask for, as far as they are personally concerned, exert themselves in the cause of their suffering sisters the voice of reproach is silenced. Let not the cry of the degraded and heartbroken go forth in vain to the ear of those whose lot is happier. In our little band of workers and leaders the most earnest are those whose

own domestic bliss is perfect. We want to make this band larger, and sinking all minor differences, join hands with all who strive for the elevation of women."

The relation of the women of the upper class to the movement is thus sketched in a letter:—

"Is the industrial school you speak of, for girls? I should be interested in such an institution. But what we want to help women, is to bring women of the upper classes into the active concerns of life—women of the lower classes have nearly as good a chance of maintaining themselves in an independent position as men, at least in the manufacturing districts. What I most desire is to see men and women of the *middle classes* stand on the same terms of equality as prevail in the working classes—and the highest aristocracy. A *great lady* or a *factory woman* are independent persons—personages—the women of the middle classes are *nobodies*, and if they act for themselves they lose caste!

"Nothing can go right without the union of the full force and intellect of all sections of society. The inert mass of deadness to public interest—what is everybody's business is nobody's business—is the bane of national and personal nobleness. This is fostered by inculcating the duty of indifference on women—and they drag down the men to their own enforced level of stagnation."

The following expresses her ideal of the marriage relation:—

"I think that the notion that the husband ought to have headship or authority over his wife, is the root of all social evils. It is a doctrine demoralizing alike to men

and women. Husband and wife should be co-ordinate and co-equal, each owing to the other entire personal service and devotion, their obligations being strictly reciprocal and mutual. In a happy marriage, there is no question of 'obedience' or which shall be 'paramount'; in an unhappy marriage a claim to authority only embitters strife. Brothers, sisters or partners, can contrive to exist in Society without the law declaring that one owes obedience to the other; why not husband and wife?"

To a correspondent who had asked if she thought the study of politics would make our countrywomen less frivolous or better mothers, and ensure for the next generation a better race of human beings, she replies:—

"I do not like to assent to general charges of frivolity against our countrywomen. I do not believe that women are more frivolous than men—if there is a difference, I believe that of the two women are rather more earnest and serious; and the frivolities of men, such as horse-racing and dissipation, are far more injurious to Society than any practice of women.

"To the last part of the question I answer most emphatically 'yes'; it would be worth while to take all these pains to enfranchise them."

## PART III.

FROM THE REFORM ACT OF 1867 TO THE  
REFORM ACT OF 1884.

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### CHAPTER IV.

#### PIONEER WORK.

##### § 10. *Two Pioneer Groups.*

THE spirit in which the women who were the pioneers of the Suffrage movement, approached their life's work, can hardly be better realized than by the following passages from the two lectures by Mrs. Jameson which breathed the breath of organized life into their labours.

The first extract is from "Sisters of Charity," a lecture delivered privately on 14th February 1855 and printed by request.

"It is not charity, nor energy, nor intelligence which are wanting in our women, any more than dauntless bravery in our men. But something is wanting, or surely from so much good material more positive and extended social benefit would arise.

"What is wanting is more moral courage, more common sense on the part of our legislators.





**MRS. JAMESON.** (From a photograph of the bust by Gibson in the National Portrait Gallery.)

“If men were better educated they would sympathize in the necessity of giving a better education to women. They would perceive the wisdom of applying, on a large and efficient scale, the means of health, strength and progress which lie in the gentler capacities of the gentler sex—material ready at hand, as yet wasted in desultory, often undirected efforts, are perishing inert, or fermenting to evil and despair.

“Lying at the source of the mischief we trace a great *mistake* and a great want.

“The great *mistake* seems to have been that in all our legislation it is taken for granted that the woman is always protected, always under tutelage, always within the precincts of a home, finding there her work, her interests, her duties and her happiness; but is this true? We know that it is altogether false. There are thousands and thousands of women who have no protection, no home. . . . As to the *want*, what I insist on particularly is that the means do not exist for the training of those powers; that the sphere of duty which should occupy them is not acknowledged; and I must express my deep conviction that Society is suffering in its depths through the great mistake and this great want.”

The second extract is from the “Communion of Labour.”

“Wherever men and women do not work together helpfully and harmoniously, and in accordance with the domestic relations—wherever there is not the Communion of Love and the Communion of Labour—there must necessarily enter the elements of discord and decay.”

These words are from the closing paragraph of the second lecture, "Communion of Labour," which was also delivered privately (on 28th June 1856) and printed by desire.

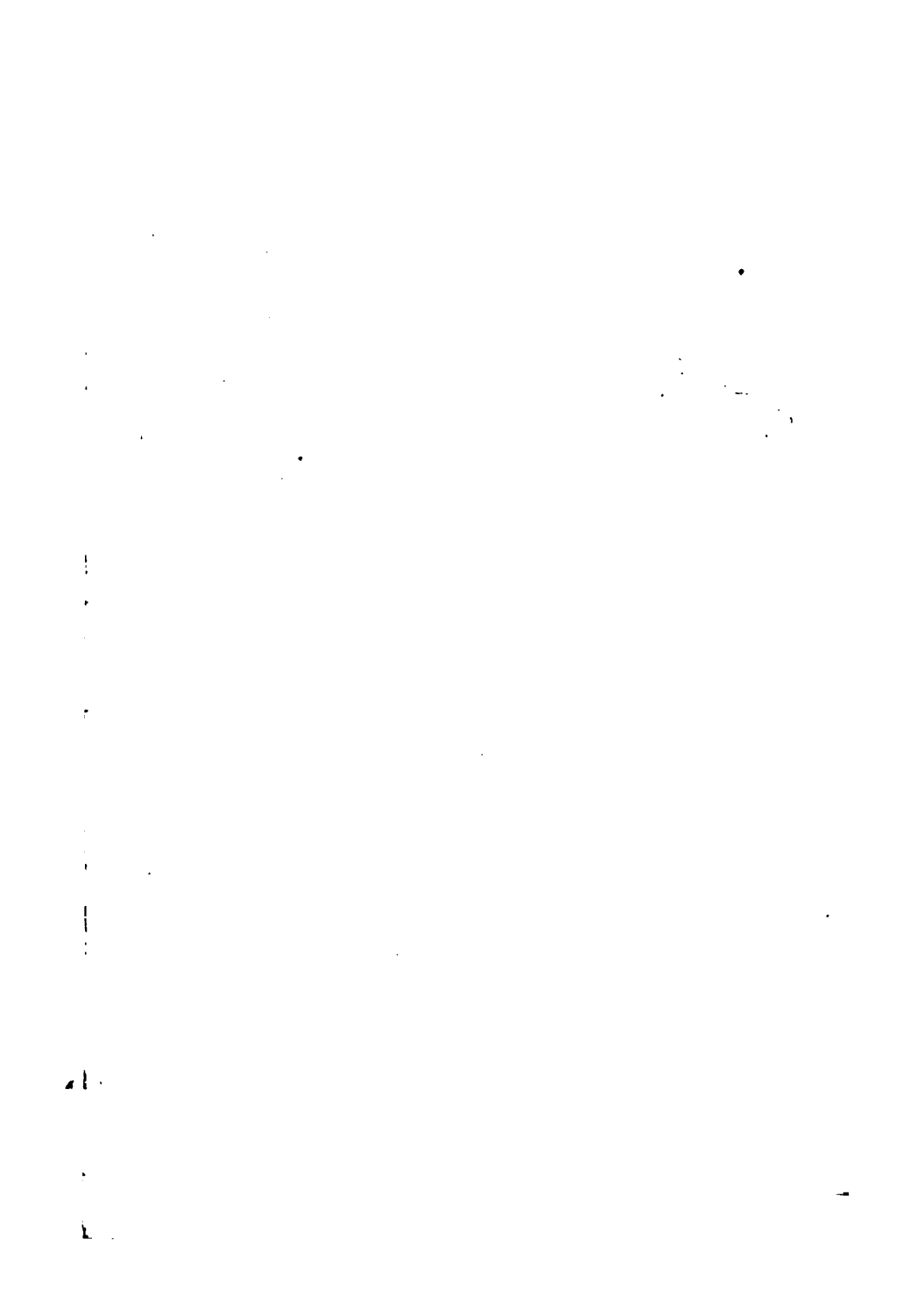
These lectures had large demand, and in 1859 they were reprinted in one small volume together with a letter to Lord John Russell, "on the present conditions and requirements of the women of England." This letter was suggested by the following memorable passage in his speech as President of the Social Science Association at its second meeting in 1858.

"Every one must have observed the new influence which has not been asserted or sought, but is falling to the lot of women, in swaying the destinies of the world. It is not a share in directing the patronage of ministers and sharing in the council of kings, but a portion in the formation and moulding of public opinion. . . . It seems to me—and I am confirmed in this by the bright examples of heroic benevolence—that if the younger generation are to be an improvement on their fathers, if sin is to have less dominion and religion more power, if vice is to be abashed and virtue to be honoured, it is to woman we must look for such a generation."

It was in a note to that letter that Mrs. Jameson records that *the first time she heard women publicly addressed as members of the community, and co-operating in social objects, was in a speech from Lord Robert Cecil.*

The new influence had already shown itself in a very practical manner—the first number of the *English-woman's Journal* (March 1858) relates that, "In the summer and autumn of 1855 petitions were circu-







(BARBARA LEIGH SMITH) MRS. EODICHON. (From the large painting at Girton College, by Miss Osborne.)

lated throughout England representing the injustice of the law respecting the property and earnings of married women, and impressing Parliament to take the matter into immediate consideration. These petitions, organized and started by a couple of philanthropic ladies, resulted in March 1856 in the presentation to both Houses of a petition signed by 3000 women; in addition to this women's petition, petitions from all parts of the country poured in, bearing the signatures of 26,000 men and women. Thus there was no mistaking the profound and universal interest felt in the question and the absolute necessity for immediate alleviation." The journal goes on to relate that this subject was taken up by the Law Amendment Society, and referred by them to a committee, by whom a Reform Bill was prepared; it does not state that the two "philanthropic ladies" were Barbara Leigh Smith and Bessie Rayner Parkes, the same two ladies who, aided in all their schemes by the counsels and encouragement of Mrs. Jameson, had in 1858 started the *Englishwoman's Journal*.

Writing in 1865 Miss Parkes says:—

"Ten years ago, although there was an earnest and active group of people deeply interested in all that relates to female education and industry, and to the reform of the laws affecting the property of married women, and though efforts were being made in many directions for bettering those of the condition of the mass of single women in this country, there was no centre of meeting nor any work which could be said to draw together the names of the ladies so actively

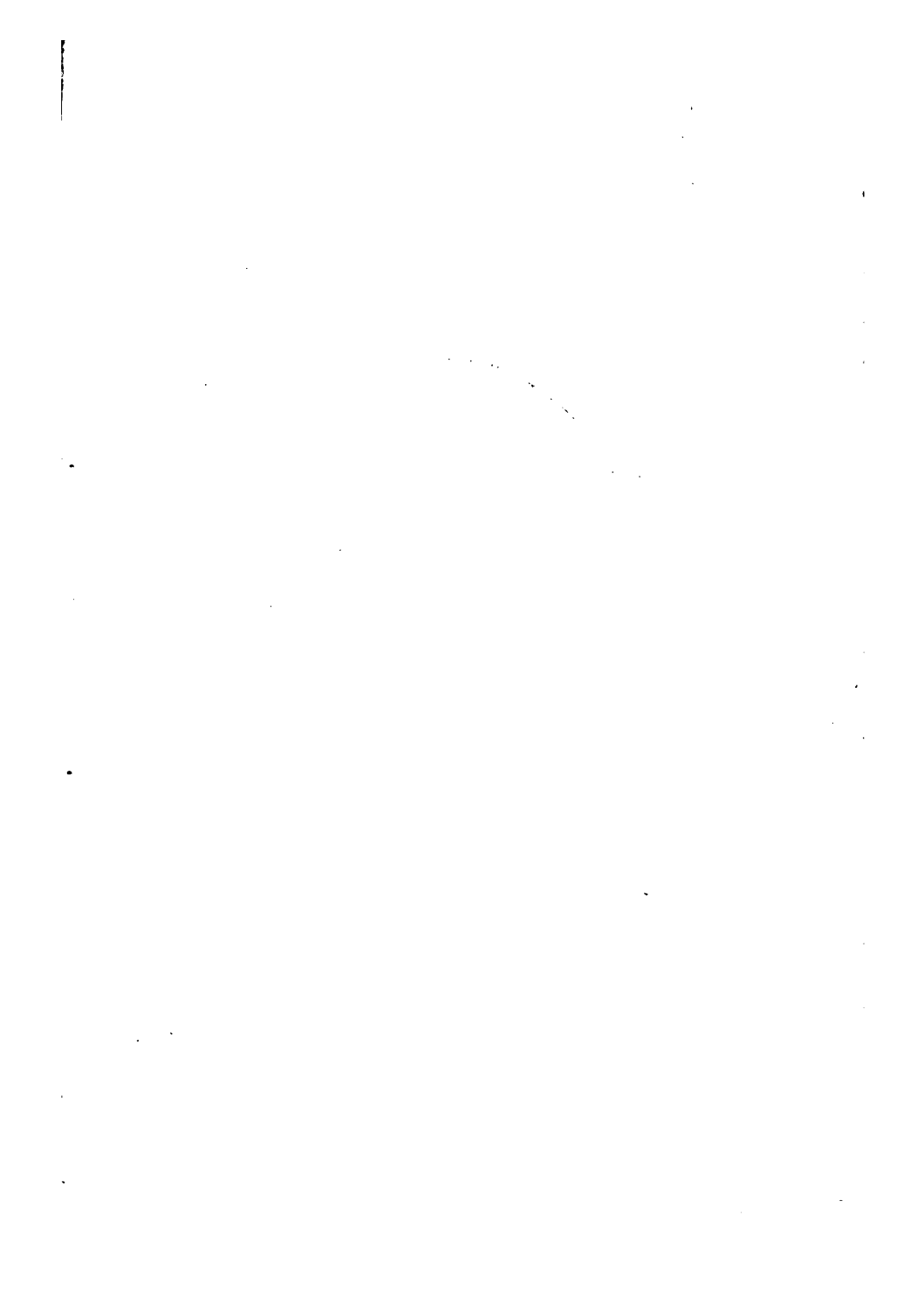
employed." The first step towards creating such a centre was the inauguration of the *Englishwoman's Journal*, in co-operation with which Miss Jessie Boucherett and Miss Adelaide Ann Proctor in the following year formed the Society for the Employment of Women.<sup>1</sup>

Here it may be well to glance aside and reflect on the character of that group of early pioneers—four young women, all of good lineage, high education, and independent means.

Miss Barbara Leigh Smith (Mrs. Bodichon) was grand-daughter and daughter of well-known members of Parliament, William Smith, and his son Benjamin, who succeeded him as M.P. for Norwich, where they belonged "to the group who have given such help to the cause of enlightenment, Taylors and Austins, Martineaus and Gurneys." Her old co-worker, Bessie Rayner Parkes (Madame Belloc), at the time of her death wrote of Mrs Bodichon as<sup>2</sup> "cradled in the traditions of the House." . . . . "The first public movement with which, when almost a child, she was actively associated, was the great Anti-Corn League struggle of Cobden and Bright. When first I was brought into close intimacy with Barbara Leigh Smith in 1846 that struggle had just been won. She was then a beautiful, active girl of nineteen, ardent in every social cause, and those years from 1846 to 1857 were to us bright with the light of dawn." . . . . It was in 1854 that she began her work by collecting in a pamphlet all the laws specially relating to women, a pamphlet very thin and insignificant looking, but destined

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C.

<sup>2</sup> See *Englishwoman's Review*, July 1891, p. 146.





(BESSIE RAYNER PARKES) MADAM BELLOC.  
(After a daguerreotype.)

to prove the small end of the wedge which was to change the whole fabric of the law. The importance of her social relations brought the subject before influential men connected with the society for the amendment of the law; Lord Brougham and Mr. George Hastings took the question up actively. . . . After her marriage with Dr. Bodichon, a French physician of marked ability, her time was divided between Algiers, where he practised for many years, in the winter, and London and Sussex in the summer, keeping up her active interest and liberal support of the works she had so large a share in starting. "She had essentially the initiative mind, and it may truly be said of her that she scattered ideas broadcast, and that they took root far and wide . . . in Barbara Leigh Smith existed that indefinable power, which his contemporaries appear to have recognized in Arthur Hallam, a something which transcended that which was done. . . . I feel, when I think of how much she did do, and yet of the more popular greatness of so many others, that I can only fitly quote the poet's words:

'But thou, O friend, wert more than these.'<sup>1</sup>

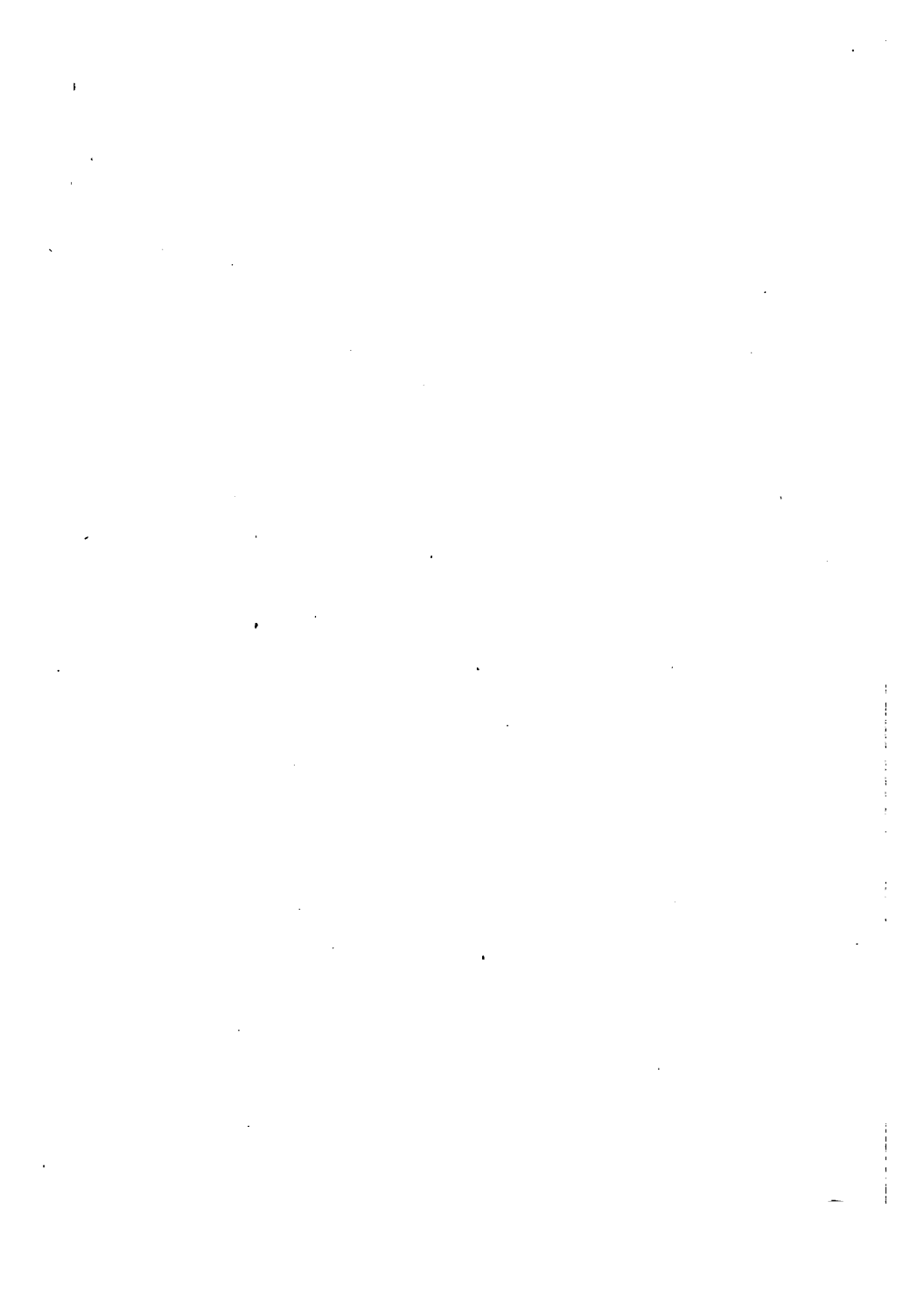
Miss Parkes, grand-daughter on her mother's side of the celebrated Joseph Priestley, after giving much strenuous work and good writing to the *Englishwoman's Journal*, passed from the scene of active co-operation on her marriage with Monsieur Belloc, which caused her to make her home in France. Nevertheless she still watches the progress made, and has given the present writer helpful information.

<sup>1</sup> See *Englishwoman's Review*, July 1891, p. 149.

Of the third in that group—heir to old manorial rights, lineal descendants of the Askews—Jessie Boucherett, by the steadfast purpose of her life to help women to honourable independence, whether by opening up the way to new opportunities, or by the training in new skill, or by resistance to the restrictive barriers of legislation, has with tireless perseverance exerted an influence for healthful independence.

She was consuming her soul in solitary desire to help women to better economic conditions when one day she caught sight, on a railway bookstall, of a number of the *Englishwoman's Journal*. She bought it, attracted by the title, but expecting nothing better than the inanities commonly considered fit for women. To her surprise and joy she found her own unspoken aspirations reflected in its pages. She lost no time in repairing to the office of the journal, where she expected to find some rather dowdy old lady. But instead a handsome young woman, dressed in admirable taste, was seated at the table. It was Miss Parkes; in a few minutes another young lady, also beautifully dressed, came in, of radiant beauty, with masses of golden hair. Such is the description given by Jessie Boucherett, long years after, of her first meeting with Barbara Leigh Smith and Bessie Parkes. She began forthwith to plan the desire of her life, a Society for Promoting the Employment of Women. In this she was aided by Adelaide Ann Proctor, whose poems are so tinged with melancholy that one would never expect to hear of their writer being associated with fun. "All the fun left the office when Miss Proctor died," said good old







MISS JESSIE BOUCHERETT.  
(After a photograph about 1860.)

Miss Sarah Lewin, when more than thirty years after she was telling her reminiscences to the present writer. Miss Lewin herself had been attracted to that band of workers — just as Miss Boucherett had been — by a casual meeting with an early number of the *Englishwoman's Journal*. She had early had the necessity laid on her to work for her living; she knew by experience how much women needed to learn *how* to work, and how hard it was for them to get opportunity to learn. She soon became Assistant Secretary to the Society for Employment of Women, and worked to a ripe old age, happy in helping other women to learn how to work.

This is not the place to pursue the history of that Society; suffice it to say that it gave a healthful impetus in many directions, and works quietly and steadily still. The *Englishwoman's Journal*, which continued for seven years, became incorporated after its seventy-eighth number with the short-lived *Alexandra Magazine*. When the *Alexandra* ceased, the journal was revived by Miss Boucherett under the title of the *Englishwoman's Review*, and in that form it has sought to preserve some continuous record of the woman's movement to the present time.

While the group in Langham Street were centring their efforts on opening occupations and technical training, another group was forming, consisting of women aspiring after means of higher education. The "Kensington Society," as the little group called itself, met at the house of Mrs. Manning for the discussion of important questions. It is a truly remarkable group,

looked at after the lapse of over thirty years, when the life works of so many have entered into history.

There were the two future founders of Girton College (Mrs. Bodichon and Miss Emily Davies), the founders of the Cheltenham Ladies' College (Miss Beale) and of the North London Collegiate School (Miss Buss), Miss Garrett (now Mrs. Garrett Anderson), at that time pursuing the medical studies which enabled her to enter the doors of the profession: her sister, Mrs. J. W. Smith, soon to become the Honorary Secretary of the first Women's Suffrage Committee. Miss Boucherett, like Mrs. Bodichon, had a place in both groups; amongst the Kensington group were also Miss Hare (afterwards Mrs. Westlake), Miss Helen Taylor (step-daughter of Mr. J. S. Mill), and Miss Wolstenholme, afterwards Mrs. Elmy.

The Kensington Society was keenly alive to the importance of the suffrage. The records of its proceedings preserved by its Honorary Secretary, Miss Davies, show the question "Is the extension of the Parliamentary franchise to women desirable, and if so, under what conditions?" amongst the subjects appointed for discussion on the programme issued in the summer of 1865. Amongst those who sent in papers were Miss Hare, Miss Boucherett, Miss Manning. The discussion took place on 21st November, just after Mr. John Stuart Mill had been elected Member for Westminster and in his election address had brought in Women's Suffrage.

The opportunity had come!

§ 11. *The First Petition.*

A Reform Bill was before the country and the friends of Women's Suffrage had a champion in the House of Commons. Surely the time to move had come! They asked Mr. Mill if he would present a petition from women. He said he would, if it had a hundred names—he would not approve of presenting one with less. Still they hesitated, lest the time might not be ripe, but when on the morning of 28th April 1866 they read in the morning's paper that Mr. Disraeli had said the night before in the House of Commons, "I say that in a country governed by a woman—where you allow women to form part of the other estate of the realm—peeresses in their own right, for example—where you allow a woman not only to hold land, but to be a lady of the manor and hold legal courts—where a woman by law may be a churchwarden and overseer of the poor—I do not see, where she has so much to do with the State and Church, on what reasons, if you come to right, she has not a right to vote."

Then all doubts were removed. "Those words were the spark that fired the train." Moved by a common impulse, Mrs. Bodichon, Miss Boucherett and Miss Davies came together that morning; they drafted a petition, sent it for Mr. Mill's approval and then set to work.

Day by day a little informal committee of workers met at Miss Garrett's, where Miss Rosamond Hill also came and worked with them. The petition was quickly circulated through the groups of the pioneer workers,

and through them to many beyond, and instead of one hundred, 1499 signatures were collected in little over a fortnight. The petition was as follows:—

“That it having been expressly laid down by high authorities that the possession of property in this country carries with it the right to vote in the election of Representatives in Parliament: it is an evident anomaly that some holders of property are allowed to use their right, while others, forming no less a constituent part of the nation, and equally qualified by law to hold property, are not able to exercise this privilege.

“That the participation of women in the Government is consistent with the principles of the British Constitution, inasmuch as women in these islands have always been held capable of sovereignty and women are eligible to various public offices.

“Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray your Honourable House to consider the expediency of providing for the representation of all householders, without distinction of sex, who possess such property or rental qualification as your Honourable House may determine.”

The signatures included many names well known, or names to hereafter become known amongst the workers of the world—among writers, Frances Power Cobbe, Amelia Barbara Edwards, Matilda Betham Edwards, Eliza and H. M. Keary, Harriet Martineau, Mary Somerville, Anna Swanwick, Augusta Webster, Susanna Winkworth; among leaders of social work, Martha Merrington (first woman elected Poor Law Guardian),

Florence Davenport Hill, Joanna Hill, Louisa Boucherett (first movers in boarding out pauper children), Mrs. W. Grey, Miss Shireff (leaders in the Girls' High School movement), Mrs. Samuel Lucas (first President, British Women's Temperance Association), Mrs. Josephine Butler; and amongst those who became leaders in the Women's Suffrage work, Viscountess Amberley, Lady Anna Gore Langton (successive Presidents of the Bristol Society), Mrs. Priscilla Bright M'Laren (President of the Edinburgh Society), Mrs. P. A. Taylor, Miss Liliashworth (Mrs. Hallet), Miss C. A. Biggs, Mrs. Haslam, Miss Agnes M'Laren, Mrs. Pease Nichol, Misses Priestman, Miss Eliza Wigham, etc., etc.

The day came when the petition was to be taken down to Mr. Mill at the House of Commons by Mrs. Bodichon, but she was very unwell, and asked Miss Davies to go in her stead, who set forth not a little nervous at such a mission; Miss Garrett offered to accompany her, and they took a cab with the portentous roll, to Westminster Hall. There, to their relief, they met Mr. Fawcett, who went at once in search of Mr. Mill. Meantime they felt ill at ease with their big roll in that great Hall, thronged as it was in those days with many going to and fro to the old law courts. They made friends with the applewoman whose stall was near the entrance, and she hid the roll beneath her table. Presently Mr. Mill arrived. "Where is the petition?" he asked—then they had to confess it was hidden away beneath the applewoman's stall. But it was quickly produced thence, and Mr. Mill, on seeing it, exclaimed, "Ah, this I can brandish with effect."

It was presented on June 7th, the day the House went into Committee on the Representation of the People Bill. Mr. Mill stated in the House that the signatures had been collected in little over a fortnight.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The *Times* described it as a petition of over 1500 signatures from ladies of Westminster—this was an error, the number was 1499 and collected from all parts of the Kingdom.



\* = Year  
of a General  
Election.

o 1899.

Chief Events in Work throughout the Country.

1867	26. Lily Maxwell's vote, p. 69.	1867
*1868	14. First Public Meeting, Manchester, p. 71.	1868*
	3. Second Public Meeting, Birmingham.	
1869	17. First Public Meeting in London. 18,500 pamphlets circulated by London Society, p. 90.	1869
1870	4. Meeting in Bristol, p. 104.	1870
1871	28. Conference in London. Memorial to Mr. Gladstone, 116.	1871
1872	17. Central Committee formed, p. 118.	1872
	6. Conference in Birmingham, p. 122.	
1873	3. Death of Mr. J. S. Mill, p. 132.	1873
*1874	Trials with 1800 names sent to Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone, pp. 123-4.	1874*
1875	Men's Suffrage first brought forward in House of Commons, p. 123-4.	1875
1876	Men's Suffrage first brought forward in House of Commons, p. 123-4.	1876
1877	Station to Sir Stafford Northcote, p. 142.	1877
1878		1878
1879		1879
*1880	Series of Demonstrations of Women began by that in Manchester in February.	1880*
1881	5. The Royal Assent to Women's Suffrage in the Isle of Man. Acts proclaimed on Tynwald Hill, Jan. 31.	1881
1882		1882
1883	Memorial to Mr. Gladstone from 110 Liberal M.P.'s, p. 162.	1883
	Form Conference at Leeds, p. 159.	
1884		1884
*1885		1885*
*1886		1886*
1887		1887
1888		1888
1889	<i>Nineteenth Century</i> for June issued a Protest against Women's Suffrage, p. 178.	1889
	Death of Miss C. A. Biggs, p. 179.	
1890	18. Death of Miss Becker, p. 188.	1890
1891	National Union of Conservative Associations, Birmingham, carried Women's Suffrage Resolution by a large majority, p. 198.	1891
*1892		1892*
1893	Special Appeal Committee formed, p. 198.	1893
1894	Stopes' <i>British Freewomen</i> published.	1894
*1895		1895*
1896	18. Conference in Birmingham, p. 208.	1896
1897	Associate Scheme started, p. 215.	1897
1898		1898
1899	26. Great Meeting in Queen's Hall, London, p. 215.	1899
1900		1900
1901	Petition from 29,000 Lancashire "Factory Girls," p. 215.	1901

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## CHAPTER V.

1866 TO 1869.

### § 12. *Early Steps.*

THE presentation of the petition on June 7th, 1866, was directly followed by a motion from Mr. Mill for a return showing the number of freeholders and householders in England and Wales who, fulfilling the conditions of property or rental prescribed by law as the qualifications for the electoral franchise, are excluded from the franchise by reason of their sex.<sup>1</sup> This was the signal for many comments in the Press.

“We have no right to bamboozle any one—least of all have we a right to bamboozle women—by pretending to give them a sugar-plum, and really give them a dose of physic. What does voting imply? It implies solicitation and dunning, reproaching, humbugging and cajoling. Why are respectable women, because they happen to be spinsters or widows and live in houses of their own, to be exposed to the impertinent intrusion of agents, canvassers and candidates: to be besieged alternately

<sup>1</sup> Seconded by Mr. Potter, assented to by Mr. Secretary Walpole, and agreed to.

by the adulation of fools and by the insolence of bullies?"

Such was the cry of the hysterical *Saturday Review*.<sup>1</sup> The sober *Law Times*,<sup>2</sup> on the other hand, had said the burden of proof lay with those who would exclude women, and continued—"Having given to the question much thought, with the help of much experience, we are unable to suggest a single sound objection to the claim of female householders to vote. But there are many good reasons why they should do so, apart from that foremost one, that they have all the qualifications which the law requires to constitute an elector. They pay the same rates and taxes as other electors; they are not merely eligible to serve the office of overseer, but may be compelled to serve it, and in many parishes do really serve it. But more than all, the law has actually enfranchised them for parochial voting. They are at this moment lawful members of vestries; they may and do in fact vote at all parish meetings, upon the avowed principle that paying rates as individuals, it is but just they should have a voice in the expenditure of the rate they pay."

Organization crystallized quickly after the papers read by Mrs. Bodichon at the Social Science Congress, in October 1866. The informal Committee which had worked up the petition, had, before the close of the year, been constituted a provisional Committee with the following members:—The Dean of Canterbury (Dean Alford), Miss Boucherett, Professor Cairnes, Rev. W. L.

<sup>1</sup> *Saturday Review*, 21st July 1866.

<sup>2</sup> *Law Times*, 16th June 1866.

Clay, Miss Emily Davies, Lady Goldsmid, George W. Hastings, James Heywood, F.R.S., Mrs. Knox (Isa Craig), Miss Manning, Mrs. Hensleigh Wedgwood; Mrs. P. A. Taylor, Treasurer; Mrs. J. W. Smith, Honorary Secretary.

In Manchester at a meeting of six persons, held in the house of Dr. Louis Borchardt on 11th January 1867, Mr. Jacob Bright in the chair, it was resolved to form a committee for the promotion of the enfranchisement of women; the other persons present were, the Rev. S. A. Steinthal, Mrs. Gloyne, Mr. Max Kyllman and Miss Wolstenholm.

At the next meeting, held at Mr. Duffield's office on 13th February, there were present Mrs. Winkworth (in the chair), Mrs. Gloyne, Mrs. Hume Rothery, Mr. and Mrs. Kyllman, Mrs. R. R. Moore, Miss Miall, Miss Wilson, Miss Becker, Miss Wolstenholm, and the Rev. S. Alfred Steinthal. Miss Becker was appointed Secretary, and energetic action began.

The London Committee had in November issued a circular giving the text of a petition to be signed by women householders, together with full particulars as to the qualifications which should entitle women to vote.

The Manchester Committee lost no time in joining in the work, and issued a circular which stated that "it was proposed during the current session to present to Parliament two petitions, one to be signed exclusively by women who are legally qualified to vote in all respects except that of sex, the other by persons of all classes, both men and women. Local petitions will also be presented from various places."

The women householder petition, with the signatures of 1605 women duly qualified as forty shilling freeholders, or £10 leaseholders, copyholders or occupiers in boroughs, was presented to the House of Commons on April 8th by the Right Hon. Russell Gurney; the Hon. H. A. Bruce had on March 28th presented the general petition signed by 3559 persons of all classes; a similar petition, with over 3000 signatures, was presented by Mr. Mill on April 5th. The signatories to these petitions included many literary and professional men and women; some of the best known amongst them will be found in the list of supporters to the movement at the close of this chapter.

The text of the petition from women householders was as follows:—

“That your Petitioners fulfil the conditions of property or rental prescribed by law as the qualification of the electoral franchise and exercise in their own names the right of pertaining to such conditions.

“That the principles on which the Government of the United Kingdom is based imply the representation of all classes and interests in the State.

“That the reasons alleged for withholding the franchise from certain classes of Her Majesty's subjects do not apply to your Petitioners.

“Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray your Honourable House to grant such persons as fulfil all the conditions which entitle to a vote in the election of all Members of Parliament, excepting only that of sex, the privilege of taking part in the choice of fit persons to represent the people in your Honourable House.”





*Photo. by Hollyer.*

JOHN STUART MILL, M.P. (After the portrait by G. F. Watts, R.A.,  
in the National Portrait Gallery.)



§ 13. *The Debate on Mr. J. S. Mill's Amendment.*

On May 20th, 1867, Mr. Mill moved his amendment to the Representation of the People Bill (clause 4) "to leave out the word 'men' in order to insert the word person instead thereof."

His speech was listened to, according to a contemporary account, with interest and curiosity. The whole debate is of interest, not only as the first on the subject in Parliament, but as a type of many succeeding debates. If no subsequent speech in its favour has surpassed Mr. Mill's condensed and forcible presentment, neither has any speech against it elicited any novelty in the opposition. Mr. Mill opened by saying that the extension he was about to propose could excite no party feeling or class feeling; he dwelt on its justice, its constitutional character. "Allow me to ask, what is the meaning of political freedom? Is it anything but the control of those who do make politics their business by those who do not? Is it not the very essence of constitutional liberty, that men come from their looms and their forges to decide, and decide well, whether they are properly governed and whom they will be governed by?"

He indicated how the question was in truth a development, of the greater sense of mutual interest and companionship that was arising between men and women, and the evil for the character of each which an unequal level must entail.

Mr. Karslake (M.P. for Colchester) opposed the motion on the ground that giving votes to single women

would entail its extension to married women. As not a single lady in Essex had asked him to support the proposal, he concluded women were quite content with the advantages they already possessed.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Denman (M.P. for Tiverton) said that when he read the draft of the Bill it struck him as a lawyer, that it was more than doubtful whether as it stood it did not confer the suffrage on women, and he had put a question to that effect to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had replied, he believed he would find it had not that effect; nevertheless he "ventured to ask the Attorney and Solicitor General, whether as lawyers they were confident the Bill as it stood would not confer the suffrage on women. In the first Reform Act the word *man* did not occur, but *male* persons was used. He believed if the Court of Queen's Bench had to decide on the clauses of this Bill they would have to confer the Suffrage on female persons as well as males.

"In one of the colonies of Australia, by the use of the word person accidentally inserted in an Act of the Legislature, the female suffrage was given. Subsequently it was said to have been found that such an advantage had arisen from its operation that they declined to alter it, not wishing to get rid of it."

Mr. Fawcett (M.P. for Brighton), after criticizing Mr. Karlake's speech, instanced the change in public opinion in regard to the admission of girls to the Cambridge Local Examinations.

Mr. Laing (M.P. for Orkney) based his opposition on

<sup>1</sup>On July 25th Mr. Karlake presented a petition from 129 ladies and others resident in Colchester in favour of the proposed reform.

the fear of women entering the House of Commons. Sir George Bowyer (M.P. for Wexford Co.) supported the motion. Viscount Galway (M.P. for East Retford) begged Mr. Mill to withdraw his motion and let them proceed to more important business; if pressed, the motion would place "many admirers of the fair in an embarrassing position." Mr. Onslow (M.P. for Guildford) supported. Mr. Mill in reply said nothing had pleased him more than to find that every one who had attempted to argue at all had argued against something that was not before the House.

Question put—That the word man stand part of the clause.

The Committee divided. Ayes 196. Noes 73. Majority against the amendment\* 123. There were six pairs, and with the addition of the tellers this brings the total votes in favour to 81.<sup>1</sup>

#### § 14. *Further Organization.*

In the autumn of 1867 the organization of the Suffrage Societies was strengthened and extended. The Manchester Society drew up its constitution in August. The London Committee, which had been hitherto "provisional," dissolved, to be reconstituted in permanent form as the London National Society for Women's Suffrage, with an executive consisting of Miss Frances Power Cobbe, Mrs. Fawcett, Miss Hampson, Miss Lloyd, Mrs. Lucas, Mrs. Stansfeld, Mrs. P. A. Taylor (Treasurer). The Committee held its meetings at Aubrey House, Notting Hill,

<sup>1</sup> For the Division List see Appendix D.

the house of Mr. and Mrs. P. A. Taylor, and Mrs. Taylor seems to have acted as Honorary Secretary for a short interval after the early death of Mrs. J. W. Smith had removed "the most beautiful and the most talented of all the talented Garrett family" (to use the words of one of her colleagues). It was not long before an able co-adjutor was found in Caroline Ashurst Biggs, who came as a promising young worker prepared by all the traditions of her family and her up-bringing to devote herself to such a cause. Her ready pen, methodical work and untiring industry soon proved her an invaluable ally. No one ever entered any of the Suffrage offices who got through so much work, with such rapidity and apparent ease, as this serene and gentle nature who was the friend of all the workers at home and abroad; and of whom one may truly say she had "the charity that suffereth long and is kind."

Although in Scotland several meetings had been held and petitions sent up from Edinburgh and other towns, the Society in Edinburgh was first definitely organized on November 6th of that year, Mrs. Priscilla Bright M'Laren being its President then, even as she is now. Wife, mother, sister, aunt of Members of Parliament, this venerable leader ought, according to the reasoning of opponents, to be the very last to trouble herself about the franchise, for never in all those years has she been without representatives in Parliament—nay, in one Parliament<sup>1</sup> had she not her husband, two sons, two brothers, and a nephew all in the House of Commons at the same time? Yet this

<sup>1</sup> The Parliament of 1886.

lady, the best represented woman in the kingdom, has the longest unbroken record of office of any worker of the cause; ay, and the longest, largest record of affection in the hearts of young and old amongst its workers.<sup>1</sup>

The existence of three independent Societies rendered it desirable that they should secure the advantage of mutual support by some kind of federal union—accordingly at a special meeting of the Manchester National Society, held on 6th November 1867, it was resolved:—

“That this Society agrees that its members shall unite with members of the Societies having the same object, to form one National Society for Women’s Suffrage with independent centres of action; the constitution, executive and funds of each Society shall remain entirely irresponsible to and uncontrolled by the others, the bond of union to consist solely in the assumption of the name National Society for Women’s Suffrage, and the amalgamation of the names of members enrolled by each centre into one national list of supporters of the political enfranchisement of women.”

Resolutions to the same effect were adopted by the London and Edinburgh Societies, and so the Union was accomplished. Very quickly Societies were formed in Birmingham and Bristol, which also entered the Union as integral yet independent portions of the National Society for Women’s Suffrage.

The origin of the Bristol Committee can best be read in the words of the circular, written by Professor Francis William Newman, its first Honorary Secretary, by which the preliminary meeting was convened at the

<sup>1</sup> For Mrs. M'Laren's portrait, see p. 152.

house of Mr. Commissioner Matthew Davenport Hill, afterwards Recorder of Birmingham.

“*Women's Suffrage*.—The conviction has for years past spread wide and deep that any race or class which is without political representation will never in the long run escape great social injustice.

“The injustices endured by women as a class need not here be recounted and enforced. Men and women of the highest name have of late united to claim suffrage for the female sex (on the same conditions as those on which men receive the franchise), not as the remedy for the evil, but as a condition without which justice will not be attained.

“It moreover appears that the exclusion of women from the Parliamentary vote is exceptional, and perhaps illegal in the case of freeholders; it is certainly wonderful in a country where the head of the executive Government is a woman.

“On the face of the matter it would seem that the recent Reform Act—if interpreted as the Act known as Lord Romilly's bids us interpret Acts of Parliament—distinctly admits both sexes to the vote.

“Societies are formed in several cities to bring the question to the test as well as to urge the matter on public opinion and on Parliament. The fact that in Mr. Jacob Bright's recent election at Manchester a woman's vote in his favour was actually received and counted, is especially valuable.

“The Societies in London and in Manchester are urgent that an attempt should be made to form a kindred society for Bristol. It is judged especially





MISS FLORENCE DAVENPORT-HILL. (After a photograph  
taken about 1862.)



important to get women's names on the register before the revising barrister comes to inspect it. His refusal of a woman's name may bring the question under judicial examination.

"With a view to forming such a society, if possible, Mr. Commissioner Hill, who is now at 3 Mall, Clifton, permits his daughter to invite so many as his drawing-room will hold, to meet there on 24th January 1868, at 3 p.m., for a friendly consultation on this public question, although from the narrowness of space the meeting cannot be public."

Mrs. Beddoe has often told her recollections how, at that meeting, Mr. Commissioner Hill, in asking those present to join the society, said he was "asking them to help a great cause that was unlike all other great causes, in that it would require their support for a very short time. The claim was so clear and reasonable, it had but to be brought before Parliament to be granted."

That happy anticipation of easy achievement, delusive as we now know it to have been, was very general in those days, and started the movement in a spirit of cheerful hope, that tended not a little to its strength, and that rings on yet in the utterances of its younger workers, though with the elder hope has perhaps become more of the patient, less of the cheerful sort.

The first annual report of the Scottish Society concludes by pressing on the future women electors to prepare themselves "for the duties hereafter to devolve on them, that by religiously weighing the solemnities of life and its responsibilities, and by earnest, faithful study of

the great questions that affect humanity, they may be qualified afterwards to exercise the franchise, wisely and conscientiously, so that the accession of women to the electoral ranks may prove truly a great benefit to the whole community in our country."

In a letter of about the same period Miss Becker wrote:—"I must make a vigorous effort to beg for money in Manchester, to go on. I do believe that if we are thoroughly bent on our point, and play our cards well, we may see women voting at the next election, and I am quite sure that if they do not vote then it will be the last general election from which they will be excluded."

#### § 15. *New Light.*

At this time a new aspect was thrown on the state of affairs by the historical researches of Mr. Chisholm Anstey—whom Professor Newman characterised as the champion of the suffrage cause in law, even as Mr. Mill was in Parliament. In a pamphlet, *On some Supposed Constitutional Restraints on the Parliamentary Franchise*, written before the passing of the Reform Act, and again in his *Notes upon the Representation of the People Act of 1867*,<sup>1</sup> Mr. Chisholm Anstey had put forward a large mass of curious evidence, hitherto buried in old documents and reports, showing that women had ancient legal rights to the franchise.

<sup>1</sup> The passages in these two works relating to women, may be consulted in the pages of the *Women's Suffrage Journal*, where they were quoted in full in the numbers for August and September 1877.



**MRS. BEDDOE.** (From a photograph about 1860.)



The idea that to admit women to the suffrage was an innovation, began to give place to the view that there was neither statute nor judicial decision declaring them incapable of voting for Members of Parliament, but that they were really entitled to all the benefits of the recent Act for amending the representation of the people. The Manchester Committee resolved to take its stand on the existing law, and being satisfied that under it women ratepayers were actually entitled to vote, they determined to take steps to have them placed on the register; in this policy they were aided by the effective co-operation of the London, Bristol and Birmingham Societies.

An incident had occurred which gave them great practical assistance—the fact of a woman actually voting at the bye-election which took place in Manchester on 26th November 1867.

The incident is thus related in the *Englishwoman's Review* for January 1868:—

“Lord Byron remarked on the suddenness of his rise into celebrity ‘I awoke one morning and found myself famous.’ Much the same may now be said of a very different person, Mrs. Lily Maxwell of Manchester. On the 25th of November there was nothing to distinguish her from the many other independent women who keep shops in that town. On the 26th she recorded her vote for Mr. Jacob Bright, and at once assumed a humble place in the annals of our time. We are told that Mrs. Lily Maxwell is an intelligent person of respectable appearance, and that she keeps a small shop for the sale of crockery ware. Her act is likely to produce con-

siderable moral effect; perhaps even some legal effect also.

"The *Times* suggests that her name was put on the register by a 'deep-laid plot of the Women's Suffrage Society.' This was certainly not the case; for neither the Secretary of the Manchester Women's Suffrage Society, nor Mrs. Maxwell herself, was aware, until a day or two before the election, that her name was on the register of electors.

"When informed of the circumstance, Lily Maxwell at once announced her readiness to vote, and her intention of voting in favour of Mr. Jacob Bright, of whose political principles she was a warm admirer, declaring that if she had twenty votes she would give them all to him.

"It is sometimes said that women, especially those of the working class, have no political opinion at all, and would not care to vote. Yet this woman, who by chance was furnished with a vote, professed strong political opinions, and was delighted to have a chance of expressing them.

"Accordingly, on the following day she went to Mr. Bright's committee-room, accompanied by Miss Becker, the able and zealous secretary of the Manchester Suffrage Society, and by another lady, also a member of the Committee. From thence the ladies were escorted by several gentlemen to the polling-place, which was a large room containing several booths. Mrs. Maxwell's name being on the list of electors, the returning officer had no choice in the matter, but was bound to accept her vote.

"As soon as it was given the other voters in the room,

whether supporters of Mr. Bright's or of the other candidate's, united in three hearty cheers for the heroine of the day. There was not the slightest confusion, and a lady present said there was less inconvenience from the crowd than is often experienced at a public concert or fashionable chapel. How it happened that the name of a woman came to be placed on the electoral list is quite unknown to us. Probably Lily was mistaken for a man's name."

### § 16. *Consequent Policy.*

Early in 1868 the policy laid down by the Societies was publicly enunciated at a meeting held in the Assembly Room of the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, on April 14th, of which Miss Becker most truly wrote, "Our meeting is an era in the history of our movement."

It was the first public meeting held on the question. It was the first meeting addressed in this country by women. It formulated the policy which has been pursued from that day forth by the Women's Suffrage Societies, as well as the policy of the moment.

The chair was taken by Mr. Pochin (Mayor of Salford). The first resolution, moved by Miss Becker, declared the aims of the movement, in precisely the same terms as are used at the present time by the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies:—

"That the exclusion of women from the exercise of the franchise in the election of Members of Parliament being unjust in principle and inexpedient in practice, this meeting is of opinion that the right of voting should be

granted to them *on the same terms as it is or may be granted to men.*"

This was seconded by Archdeacon Sandford and supported by Mr. F. B. Potter, M.P., and Dr. Pankhurst.

The second resolution was moved by Mrs. Pochin.

"That this meeting expresses its cordial approval of the objects of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, and of the course it has hitherto pursued, and pledges itself to support its future efforts by all practical and constitutional methods, especially by urging women possessing legal qualifications to claim to be put on the Parliamentary register."

This was seconded by Mr. Chisholm Anstey and supported by Mr. Jacob Bright, M.P.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Mill was moved by Miss Annie Robertson (of Dublin) and seconded by Mr. F. W. H. Myers.

This meeting was quickly followed by another in Birmingham. Writing on April 18th to Miss Mary Johnson, Honorary Secretary of Birmingham Committee, Miss Becker said: "I am delighted to hear how well you are progressing in Birmingham and that you contemplate a public meeting. Our success ought to be at once an encouragement and an incentive to such a step. Our resolution will then have been moved by Manchester, seconded by Birmingham, and must be accepted by the country." She adds: "I wrote to all the members who voted with Mr. Mill. Some of the answers even of those who could not come were very encouraging."

The further development of the new policy will be



best told by a selection of passages from Miss Becker's correspondence.

"The Act of 1867 has struck out the words 'male person' from the electoral law and substituted the generic term 'man,' which even in its ordinary grammatical sense is epicene and requires something in the context to restrict it to the male sex, *e.g.*, 'What shall it profit a *man* if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' 'God made *man* in His own image; male and female created He them.' Here the word 'man' means both sexes of man.

"But there exists an Act of Parliament (13 & 14 Vict. c. 21) which provides that 'in all Acts words importing the masculine gender, shall be deemed and taken to include female, unless the contrary be expressly provided.' It is not sufficient that the contrary be implied or understood; it must be expressly provided. No such provision is found in the Representation of the People Act of 1867; accordingly the ratepaying clauses of this Act, which throughout use masculine pronouns, are applied to woman ratepayers.

"Now we maintain that if the ratepaying clauses touch women who are ratepayers, the voting clauses must also comprehend them; and that it is not only unjust, but unlawful, to subject women ratepayers to the clauses imposing burdens and leave them out from the benefit of the clauses conferring privileges, of one and the same Act of Parliament.

"But this view of the case is so little understood or made known that there is reason to believe the overseers, in making out their lists of persons now entitled

to be on the register of electors, will take upon themselves, in what I believe to be an arbitrary and unauthorized manner, to omit from this list the seven thousand women householders of Manchester.

“The only remedy in this case for the omitted persons is to send in a formal claim, which the overseer is then bound to present for adjudication by the revising barrister.

“Of course the legal question could be accurately decided if only one woman claimed, but revising barristers are but men, and a man might have little or no hesitation in dismissing one claim, who would think twice before dismissing 2000, in a lump. We therefore desire if possible to have 2000 women claimants to be placed on the register of electors for the City of Manchester.

“The time for making their claims is the first three weeks of August, but if we wait till then to beat up our claimants, we shall find that we have to organize our army when we ought to be marching them off to the field.

“We therefore desire immediately to begin a house-to-house visitation of all the women householders of Manchester, explain to each of them the state of the law, ascertain which of them are willing, when the time comes, to send in their claim, and take a careful note of the names and addresses of these; then we shall need only to take the forms round to each of these, get them filled up and signed, and pour them into the revising barrister's court.”

In a letter to Mr. Anstey (April 17th) she writes:—

“The secretary to the overseers at Manchester in-

forms me that he will, in applying the ratepaying clauses of the Act of 1867, comprehend all the women householders, but that when it comes to the voting clauses he shall omit from his list of persons entitled to be placed on the register all women's names,—this amounts to seven thousand. The reason he alleges to me for taking on himself to omit them is, that he is not satisfied that they are entitled to vote, and that if he puts them on wrongfully he is liable to a penalty of £50, while if he omits them wrongfully there is no penalty.

“The most desirable thing would be to induce him to take another view of his duty and put them on *en masse*; but I fear there is no hope of this, as he said, if I could produce counsel's opinion in favour of such a course, he would not risk the penalty.”

Writing to Miss Boucherett, Miss Becker says:—

“We have made the charming discovery that we may begin collecting claims *now* to be sent in, in August. . . .

“I send a copy of the resolutions passed at our meeting yesterday. They were suggested by and drawn up by a lawyer, our city coroner, and he says we should send them to the overseers of every township in England. I shall try to get this done. Perhaps some of them may put the women on. But I feel almost overwhelmed with work, and my strength wretchedly feeble. If I were strong or rich, I could do so much!!

“There is an advantage in getting county claims: in the boroughs, the women must wait to see whether they are omitted from the original list and then claim to be inserted; but for county votes they need not wait,

—they may send in their claim beforehand, and the overseers are bound to put them on their original list, along with male claimants.”

In a letter, dated 18th May 1868, she wrote to Professor Newman, Honorary Secretary of the Bristol Women's Suffrage Committee :—

“ I send a copy of Lord Romilly's Act, which you may find useful, if you do not happen to have one. It is astonishing how impressed people are when you show them the Act, and how heedless when you merely tell them such words are in it. Its production caused a visible sensation amongst the Manchester overseers, and staggered them completely. ‘ Is this law still in force ? ’ they asked. At the end, the Chairman said ‘ We had opened his eyes ’ on the subject.”

On the same date she wrote to Dr. Pankhurst :—

“ If we had meant to rely only on the law, of course our policy would have been to keep quiet as to our rights and try the matter on one or two further cases. This is what Mr. Mill recommended, and if the preponderance of opinion among legal authorities had been that we should win in the courts, that would have been undoubtedly our wisest course. But as Mr. Denman and others tell us they believe the courts will find some way out of it, so as to avoid registering our claims, it seems to me that one ought to take advantage of the peculiar conjunction, by spreading abroad as widely as possible the fact that there is a doubt as to the actual state of the law, and collecting as many claimants as possible in order to work upon *public opinion*.

“ That is the policy of our Committee ; but this, the

first overt step that we have taken—and now I wonder what will be the effect of it.”

The following letter from the overseer of Salford to the Mayor, Mr. Pochin, was highly encouraging to the new policy :—

“ *May 29th, 1868.*

“ DEAR SIR,—In reply to your letter of the 2nd inst., relative to the placing of properly qualified females on the Parliamentary borough register, the overseers, after carefully considering section 3, 30 & 31 Vict. cap. 102, of the new Reform Act, viz.—‘Every man shall after the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty-eight, be entitled to be registered as a voter, and when registered to vote for a member or members to serve in Parliament for a borough, who is qualified as follows’ . . . . and section 4, 13 Vict. cap. 21, of an Act for shortening the language used in Acts of Parliament, viz.—‘Be it enacted that all words importing the masculine gender shall be deemed and taken to include females, and the singular to include the plural, and the plural the singular, unless the contrary as to gender or number is expressly provided,’ have passed the following resolutions :—‘That in the judgment of the overseers, they have no alternative but to place all duly qualified females on the next Parliamentary register for the borough.’—I am, yours truly,

“ JAS. FARMER, *Chairman.*”

The next letters relate the results of the claims.

“ *Sep. 14th, 1868.*

“ MY DEAR SIR,—The women’s claims were heard by the revising barrister, Mr. Hosack, this morning, and

the decision is to be announced at ten o'clock to-morrow.

“Mr. Cobbett made a powerful and elaborate argument which made *some* impression on the Court, and still more on the auditors. He was opposed by Mr. Robinson, instructed by the Constitutional Association, whose reply was very feeble and ineffective. He appeared to me to make not the slightest attempt to combat the arguments by which it was considered that man included woman, but merely to assert over and over again that it was not so.

“The only new thing I heard was that Lord Romilly's Act did not apply solely to human beings, but included lower animals—as in the cattle plague enactments, which comprehended both sexes. I lost the thread of the argument here, but I was informed by one who had paid close attention, that it was to the effect that if a woman could be brought in under Lord Romilly's Act, so might a cow!! He appeared to hold the belief that man and woman were distinct species of animals as much as man and horses.

“It appears to be the belief of those present in court that the decision will be against us on the claims, but that the Salford and other lists of voters will not be interfered with. If that proves so, we shall have gained a great step, and need not feel discouraged by the present defeat of our claims in Manchester.

“The advice contained in your kind note of September 8th is most valuable and opportune, and we will do all in our power to act on it.—Believe me to be, yours very gratefully,

“LYDIA E. BECKER.”

“T. C. Anstey, Esq.”

To Miss Boucherett:—

*“September 25th, 1868.*

“We came off with flying colours at Ormskirk yesterday.

“I went there yesterday morning; had to leave here at half-past six. I met the lawyer. He told me that the women on the list of voters had been objected to, but that the notices were rather informal, and he expected to win that way. The township of Lydiate came first, where there were 11 women. Mr. Ellis took exception to the notices, and the revising barrister said the notices were all bad and therefore he had no jurisdiction to interfere with the register—so all the votes objected to, whether men or women, were left on the register. Then came Scarisbrick, where were 30 women, and here exactly the same thing occurred. Then Mr. Ellis said he would like to have one case on its merits—so he consented to admit, in the case of Margaret Ackers, that the notice was a good one. She was therefore called on to appear and prove her qualification in the usual way as to occupation, amount of rates, etc. When she had done so, the revising barrister, Mr. Foald, said he must hold the vote a good one by the terms of the Reform Act of last year as interpreted by the Act of 1850. It clearly comprehended women. The Tory agent said, ‘I object to that vote,’ without saying why or wherefore, and asked for an appeal, which of course was granted. Mr. Chorlton tells me the decision is of no legal value, but I think it a very good thing that another revising barrister besides Mr. Chisholm Anstey has given a judicial decision that the new Act extends to women.

“I send you a paper with the account of Mr. Chorlton's argument in Mrs. Kyllmann's claim.

“Here all the commotion about the ‘intentions of Parliament’ is out of place. She claims under the Act 8 Hen. VI., which declares that people who have every one freehold to the value of forty shillings annually shall vote. This law has never been repealed, and it is the law under which men vote to this day.”

To Mrs. Pennington:—

“It is true that the Act of 1832 conferred the new franchise on ‘male persons,’ and thus introduced the element of sex as a condition of the suffrage, for the first time into English legislation; but carefully avoids the word ‘male’ in respect of any existing franchise, so that the claims of a woman under the Statute 8 Hen. VI. is not touched by the Act of 1832. And it was very well put by Mr. Sidney Smith that the use of the word ‘male’ in the latter Act affords a presumption in favour of the capacity of women to vote. The framers of that Act must have thought that the use of the words ‘every person of full age and not subject to any legal incapacity,’ would have included women, and as they wished to exclude them they inserted the word ‘male,’ a word hitherto utterly unknown in all legislation on the franchise. I need hardly say that this statutory disability has not been removed by the Acts of 1850 and 1867, so that the case rests on constitutional capacity. It should not be forgotten that all the complicated machinery of registration in polling booths is an addition to the ancient form of election by nomination



at public assembly, and that this ancient form continues to the present day, and has been maintained in uninterrupted succession at every election from the time of the first Parliament until now.

“Women always have attended and taken part at these elections, and I suppose no one will dispute the proposition. But if a candidate were carried at a nomination by a show of hands, consisting of a majority of women, and no poll were afterwards taken, that candidate would be legally returned, though the majority of male persons present might happen to be against him. Of course it is highly improbable, not to say impossible, that such a contingency could actually occur. I merely use it as an illustration of what I meant by the proposition that the constitutional right of women to vote is antecedent to the existence of, and irrespective of, any grants from the House of Commons.

“Should the answer in the higher courts go against us—I believe it will be that the force of habit and prejudice will have biassed the minds of the judges—and it will be with a sense of the deepest humiliation that I shall recognize the new order of going to Parliament to beg as a boon that which will have been unjustly withheld as a constitutional right. We must spare no effort to avert such a calamity.”

To Miss Taunton:—

“Nov. 3rd, 1868.

“I earnestly hope that we shall not need a *petition*. The legal arguments, to show that women *have already* the right to vote, grows stronger the more they are

looked into. I am convinced that if the judges decide against us, on our appeal cases, it will be by *straining* the law.

“If men could show as good a case in any question affecting *their* rights, there would be no doubt about the decision, but the dominant sex seems afflicted with absolute inability to do justice between men and women. I have no faith in the impartiality of the tribunal to which we are compelled to submit, though the strongest possible conviction that we have both justice and law on our side. But I do think that *one* Judge, if not more, may give it in our favour.

“I have been, and am still busily engaged in looking up the legal arguments, in conjunction with our counsel, and it seems to me impossible to find a flaw in them.”

### § 17. *The Appeal to the Courts.*

The extracts just quoted indicate the expectant attitude of mind with which the Manchester Society, on October 30th, 1868, held its first annual meeting. By a bold stroke this was held at the Town Hall, in the Mayor's parlour. Across the vista of meetings held in the Mayor of Manchester's parlour year after year for thirty years, one hardly realizes how bold a stroke it seemed at the time. “I tremble, for it is a bold venture to come out into the Town Hall, and I fear lest we should not get fifty people there,” Miss Becker wrote to one of the speakers, two or three days before the meeting. On the evening of the day itself, she was able to write to Miss Holland: “The room was crowded, a fearful jam

about the door. It was the most numerously attended meeting ever known in that room. Mr. Jacob Bright said he came expecting to find a dozen or twenty people, and was quite astonished to see the room full."

The meeting elicited an article from the *Times* (November 3rd), with the remarkable admission italicized in the following extract:—

"The present condition of the Women's Suffrage question is decidedly an odd one. It is not often that the glorious uncertainty of the law is so strikingly illustrated as it has been by the decision of the revising barristers, as to whether a woman, under certain assumed conditions, may or may not vote for a Member of Parliament. . . . According to one view—the view of the majority—she may vote if her name is on the electoral register and is not objected to, the revising barrister himself remaining neutral; according to another, the barrister ought himself, if necessary, to start the objection. According to a third—the view taken in four courts—her name ought to remain on the electoral roll even although objected to. . . . However, this uncertainty is very soon to cease . . . if one supposes it was ever the intention of the legislature to give women a vote, and if they do get it, it will be by a sort of accident, in itself objectionable, though in its practical consequences perhaps harmless enough. On the other hand, *if they are refused it, the nation will, no doubt, be formally and in the light of day committing itself, through its judicial tribunal, to the dangerous doctrine that representation need not go along with taxation.*"

Four cases for appeal were selected and argued before the Court of Common Pleas on November 7th, before Lord Chief-Justice Bovill and Justices Willes, Keating and Byles—viz.: (1) The case of 5346 women householders of Manchester, who had sent in their claims to be placed on the Parliamentary register, under the provision of the new Reform Act (the case tech-

nically known as *Chorlton v. Lings*). (2) That of a lady who claimed to be put on the register of voters for South-East Lancashire under the Statute of 8 Henry IV., which secures the right of voting for Knights of the Shire in each county to "people dwelling and resident therein, of whom each has freehold of the value of forty shillings by the year." (3) The case of 1431 women in Salford, who had been placed on the register by the overseers and struck off by the revising barrister, though no one had objected to them. In this case the point was the question of jurisdiction. (4) That of 857 women of Broughton and Pendleton, who had sent in their claims to the overseers to be put on the register of Salford.

The counsel for the appellants in the two first cases was Sir J. D. Coleridge (afterwards Lord Chief-Justice Coleridge), with Dr. Pankhurst. "Sir John Coleridge, in a long and elaborate argument, spoke in favour of the ancient constitutional right of women to take part in Parliamentary elections. He produced copies from the Record Office of several indentures returning members to Parliament, the signatures to which were in the handwriting of women, or to which women were parties. The rights thus exercised had, he contended, never been taken away by Statute. He also contended that the general term 'man' in the new Reform Act included women, not only generally but specifically, under the provisions of Lord Romilly's Act, which govern the interpretation of all subsequent Statutes."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Mellish followed on the other side. Mr. J. A.

<sup>1</sup> See Second Annual Report of the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage.

Russell, Q.C., was retained as counsel for the two cases from Salford. The expenses of these last appeals were most generously borne by the Mayor and Mayoress of Salford, Mr. and Mrs. Pochin.

“Only the first was, however, argued, and decided on the ground that, as the case had been taken in the name of a woman as appellant, the court could not hear it, as a woman has no right to the appeal granted by the Registration Act. The second case was identical in principle to that of the Manchester claimants. It appeared from the interlocutors from the Bench that, had the question concerned men, the barrister would have had no jurisdiction over names already on the register and not objected to; but one of the judges suggested that he would have had the right to remove the name of a dog or a horse from the register, and therefore, by implication, identified the political status of women with that of the domestic animals.”<sup>1</sup>

The final judgment of the court was given on Monday, November 9th, in each case confirming the rejection of the claims by the revising barrister.

Similar efforts had simultaneously been made in Scotland, and an appeal taken to the Supreme Court of Appeal, on behalf of 239 women in Edinburgh, eight in Wigtown, and Miss Mary Burton, who claimed for the county. Her case was taken first, to govern the rest. The Lords Benholme, Ardmillan and Manners graciously admitted the claimants were “not disqualified intellectually or morally,” but pronounced them “disqualified legally.”

<sup>1</sup> Second Annual Report as above.

The General Election was in progress at the time: on the following day every candidate received the following note:—

“SIR,—The decision in the Court of Common Pleas having been adverse to the claims of women to vote in the election of Members of Parliament, a Bill will be introduced into the House of Commons to establish their right to vote on the same conditions as men.

“Will you kindly inform me whether you will, if returned, support such a Bill?

“I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

“LYDIA E. BECKER.”

“I had made arrangements”—(so Miss Becker wrote to one of her co-workers) “that immediately the decision was given, a note from me asking every candidate in England and Wales to support a Bill to establish Women’s Suffrage, should be despatched. The ladies of our Committee and others undertook the writing of the 800 notes, and I telegraphed from Westminster Town Hall, ‘Post your letters,’ as soon as I left the court. Most were sent off that night, so the first note of agitation throughout the country sounded simultaneously with the announcement of the decision.” Miss Robertson in Dublin and Miss M’Laren in Edinburgh sent similar notes to the candidates in Ireland and Scotland.

But there was still one other possibility open for asserting the validity of the women’s claims. The decision in the Court of Common Pleas did not affect the register in those cases where women occupiers had been placed or left thereon by the revising barristers,

and in several places women's names did by this means actually appear on the register. Miss Becker sent a short circular to each of these women electors, pointing out that the decision of the Court had not removed her from the register and exhorting her to vote. Writing to Miss Boucherett on November 17th, she described how she had been all day polling women voters; there were thirteen women on the register in Manchester, and eight of these had voted. She goes on to say: "The Tories were madly jealous when they found all the women voting Liberal, and one of Mr. Birley's friends protested. So I said I had one woman voter for him, if he liked to fetch her, and he jumped at the notion, and said he would go himself and take Mr. Birley's own carriage for her. I was delighted, for if Mr. Birley's own carriage went and their side polled a woman, it committed them to the principle and they could not object to ours. It was better they should fetch her spontaneously than that I should bring her, and it would have gone terribly against the grain for me to have taken a woman to vote, not only against my own side in politics, but for a candidate opposed to women's right. No objection was made by any party to receiving the votes; they were all accepted as a matter of course. A gentleman generously placed his carriage and pair of greys at my disposal, so we went about in style. I ought to go to bed, or I shall be used up in the morning."

To another correspondent she says: "In Salford the few women left on the register after Mr. Hosack's murderous onslaught were eagerly competed for by the opposing candidates. I saw them myself, and left with

the understanding that they were each to vote for their own man—four for Chorlton and Rawson, six for Cawley and Charley.”

It may be of interest to some to recall the places where women sent in claims, their numbers, and the various actions of the revising barristers. These particulars, in so far as they have been accessible, are collected in the tabular statement which forms Appendix E.

### § 18. *Preparations for a Bill.*

The new Parliament contained ninety members favourable to the movement,<sup>1</sup> notwithstanding the absence through death, retirement, or loss of seat, of thirty who had voted or paired with Mr. Mill, and worst loss of all, the absence of Mr. Mill himself. “The defeat of Mr. Mill is a crushing blow; how shall we fare in the House of Commons, bereft of his giant strength,” exclaimed Miss Becker in a letter at the time.

The loss was met by the action indicated in the following resolution passed by the Manchester Committee early in 1869:—

“That having taken all available steps for obtaining the recognition of the right of women to vote through the registration and revision courts, and the final decision in the Court of Common Pleas having been adverse, this Committee desires to carry the appeal from the Courts of Law to the Legislature without delay.

<sup>1</sup> Their names are recorded in the *Englishwoman's Review* of January 1869.



“That Mr. Jacob Bright be respectfully requested to confer with Mr. Russell Gurney, and other Parliamentary friends of the cause of Women’s Suffrage, as to the expediency of introducing a measure on the subject during the forthcoming session, and to communicate the result of the consultation as soon as convenient after the assembling of Parliament.”

The result of the negotiations with these Parliamentary friends was to defer any Bill for a session, and to work meantime on public opinion by means of meetings and petitions. “Our movement is now in a stage to demand much greater and more serious efforts than we have been hitherto able to accomplish. We cannot hope for immediate, perhaps not for even speedy success—and ultimate success can only be accomplished by a long course of systematic and persevering agitation. We have to tread the paths that other causes of progress have done before us—the Anti-Corn Law League, the Reform movement—and to do this we need sums of money. Mrs. Jacob Bright is to find a few friends who will each guarantee the sum of £100, to be given in annual instalments of £20.” (Letter to Mr. James Heywood, F.R.S.) It was about this time that the first of the munificent donations, which Mr. Thomas Thomasson gave time after time to the Manchester Society, appears to have been given. The help he gave in planting the foothold of the work may here be most fittingly recorded.

The London Committee issued a circular urging friends to form local committees for the purpose of getting up petitions, and similar action seems to have been followed by all the Societies. Several lectures were also organized,

Prof. Newman giving the first of his lectures for the Bristol Society in the Athenæum, Bristol, and Miss Becker making her first beginning as a public speaker by a lecture tour to Leeds, Newcastle, and eight other places.

And here let young workers take courage. Miss Becker—the clearest, calmest, best-balanced speaker the movement has ever produced, the speaker who “always seized the salient points,” who always “got at the kernel of the matter”—writes thus to Miss Holland after her lecture at Leeds: “I am bewildered, puzzled, unnerved and dissatisfied about my lecture, and unable to see my way clearly to mend matters, while the time is very short for any improvement. I believe I should do much better speaking than reading, but have not sufficient practice to make it safe to trust to mere notes for the *pièce de résistance* of the evening: my only chance is to trust to a discussion, to something being said that will give me the opportunity to reply. Learning a lecture by heart is quite out of the question. My peculiar nervous organization makes such a feat absolutely impossible.”<sup>1</sup>

The London Committee held a public meeting on July 17th, at the Gallery of the Architectural Society in Conduit Street, which was memorable for three reasons. It was the first public meeting on Women's Suffrage held in London. It was the first occasion on which Mrs. Fawcett spoke in public on the question to which so

<sup>1</sup> The lecture had been very well received, and on the motion of Mr. Hickes, a working man of Leeds, was printed in cheap form for wide distribution.

much of the best strength of her life has since been given —(in a brief speech she moved the resolution pledging the Society to use every lawful means to obtain the extension of the suffrage to women, and expressing the view that a Bill for that purpose should be introduced next session). Thirdly, the meeting was remarkable for the long array of political men who spoke. Here are the speakers in their order: Mr. Thomas Hare, Mr. Boyd Kinnear, Mr. J. S. Mill, Rev. Charles Kingsley, Prof. Fawcett, M.P., Mrs. Fawcett, Lord Houghton, Mr. John Morley, Sir Charles Dilke, M.P., Mr. P. A. Taylor, M.P., Prof. Masson, and Mr. Stansfeld, M.P.

The memorable feature of 1869 for the women's cause was the restoration of the municipal franchise to women. Some contemporary letters of Miss Becker's will best tell the story of this step onwards.

To Miss Boucherett, May 3rd, 1869. "It is quite likely we may yet have a fight this session, not on the Parliamentary, but on the *municipal* franchise. Mr. Hibbert, M.P. for Oldham, has a Bill giving it to every *male* occupier who has resided a year in a borough. Should this Bill pass the second reading, which it may do to-morrow, most likely an amendment will be moved in Committee to leave out the word *male*. Mr. Jacob Bright said if he could find half a dozen men on our side willing to support him, he would run the risk of the trial. . . . Mr. Hibbert is quite agreeable to the amendment. Altogether I feel quite encouraged, for I really think it may be carried. It will be a grand step towards the Parliamentary franchise. But we must be very quiet until notice is

actually given of the amendment, and then we must work for it, as hard as we can."

To Mrs. Bodichon, June 9th, 1869. "You would see by the papers the great victory that has been won for us by Mr. Jacob Bright on the municipal franchise. Happily the deputation is no longer necessary, indeed the mere proposal of it seems to have been enough to make the Home Secretary promise to do all we wanted. He told Mr. Jacob Bright on Monday that he should support the amendment in the name of the Government. The question therefore passed through the House without a dissentient word, causing surprise and excitement of a quiet sort and much pleasure to the real friends of the cause. The House was very good for that hour, the ministerial bench largely occupied and the ministerial side fairly occupied. But Sir T. Packington afterwards told Mr. Jacob Bright, in a good-humoured way, he supposed there was still a House of Lords!"

*"28th June 1869.*

"To the Most Honourable the Marquis of Salisbury.

"MY LORD,—I beg to call your Lordship's attention to the enclosed report of debate in the House of Commons on Mr. Jacob Bright's amendment to the Municipal Franchise Bill. Should any opposition be offered to the clause in the House of Lords, I would earnestly invoke your support of a measure which is at once liberal in restoring their vote to classes which have been disfranchised, and conservative of existing rights.

"Since the Bill passed the House of Commons, there

has occurred a contested election in the town of Bury, Lancashire, for commissioners under the Local Government Act. In this the women ratepayers, as they were entitled to do, took part and voted. But there is a proposal to supersede the local Act by the introduction of the Municipal Act, and in this case, unless the clause adopted by the House of Commons became law, the women ratepayers of Bury will be speedily deprived of the electoral powers they now possess.

“When the town of Southport was incorporated, the inhabitants of the neighbouring district of Birkdale Park resisted the extension of the Municipal Act to that place, chiefly on account of the disfranchisement which its provisions regarding term of residence and sex would effect. But of a total number of 290 ratepayers now entitled to vote under the Local Government Act, 76, or nearly one-third, would have been disfranchised because they were women. The person who has the largest assessment, and therefore the greatest number of votes, is a lady who has twelve votes. Had the district been incorporated all these votes would have been taken away from her, and the franchise given to the poor cottager, of which the largest ratepayer had been deprived. My authority for these statements is Mr. George Higginbotham, Chairman of the local Board of Commissioners, Birkdale, Southport.

“When the case is fairly before them, we do earnestly hope that the House of Lords will agree with the Commons in desiring to preserve from extinction rights in regard to local government which have been exercised by women ratepayers from the earliest period to

the present day, and which have been carefully guarded by so many successive Acts of Parliament.—I am, my Lord, your Lordship's obedient servant,

“LYDIA E. BECKER.”

Letter to the Rt. Hon. H. A. Bruce, M.P., Secretary of State:—

“12th April 1870.

“SIR,—By desire of Mr. Jacob Bright, I send you the first and second annual report of the above Society—containing information respecting the number of women who voted at the municipal election of 1st November 1869. The proportion of women to men on the register varies greatly in different boroughs, as you will perceive from the table of statistics appended to the second report—as does likewise the proportion of women to men who voted at the said election. It was not to be expected that at first the proportion would be equal, and in some places the disproportion is very great, but in the majority of cases the proportion is reasonably near, and in others, as Bolton, Bristol, Leicester, the proportion of women who voted was greater than that of the men, taking into consideration the number of each on the register. In one ward in Manchester a woman elector set her heart on being the first at the poll, and in Leeds a poor widow was the first to record her vote in Holbeck Ward. The event was commemorated by a testimonial presented by subscription of 150 working men in the ward. In Congleton two ladies had voted before the clock stood at five minutes past the hour for commencing the poll. These facts, though trivial in them-

selves, show that electoral privileges are very earnestly prized by women. The removal of the disabilities with regard to the Parliamentary vote, which is the natural sequence of the removal of municipal disabilities, would undoubtedly be followed by a similar manifestation of the value attached to these privileges, and I venture to express a most earnest hope that a Liberal Government will be found willing to declare that free government is the privilege of all Her Majesty's subjects."

§ 19. *The Supporters of the Movement.*

Here it may be well to close the period of preparation with an enumeration of the friends who had helped the cause in its early stages. The following list contains the names of proved friends who formed the backbone of the movement in the country at the time Mr. Jacob Bright introduced the first Bill into Parliament. In addition to the first pioneers and to the members of the early committees, the list contains the names of those who had spoken at meetings in support of the question; names of some who had signed the early petitions and afterwards became prominent workers in the movement; and of some men and women of literary and professional eminence who had signed and otherwise shown their steady adherence. Those who, in 1901, are still members of one or other of the Women's Suffrage Societies are marked\*. Italic type distinguishes those who have passed from this life. The members of committees are distinguished by the name of their town; the speakers by the dates of the meetings addressed.

- Alford, Dean* (London).  
*Amberley, Lord*.  
*Amberley, Lady*, Pres.,  
 Bristol.
- Anderson, Mrs., M.D.—  
 see Garrett.
- Anstey, T. Chisholm*, Esq.  
 (April '68).
- \**Ashford, Mrs.*, Birmingham.
- \**Ashworth, Miss Liliast*  
 (Mrs. Hallett), Bristol.
- Bain, Prof., of Aberdeen.
- Baines, Mrs., Birmingham.
- Becker, Miss*, Sec.; Man-  
 chester.
- \**Beddoe, Mrs.*, Bristol.
- Belloc, Madame — see  
 Parkes.
- Biggs, Caroline Ashurst*,  
 London.
- Bodichon, Mrs. (Barbara  
 Leigh Smith)*.
- Borchardt, Dr. Louis*,  
 Manchester.
- \**Boucherett, Miss Jessie*,  
 London.
- Bowyer, Sir George*, M.P.,  
 House of Commons,  
 May '67.
- Bright, Jacob*, Esq., M.P.,  
 Manchester, Jan. '70.
- Bright, Mrs. Jacob,  
 Manchester.
- Brittan, Mrs. Alfred,  
 Bristol.
- Budd, William*, M.D.  
 (of Clifton).
- Burton, Miss Mary*, Edin-  
 burgh.
- Butler, Mrs. Josephine,  
 Manchester.
- Cairnes, Prof.*, London.
- Calderwood, Prof.*, Jan.  
 '70.
- Caldicott, Dr.*, Vice-Pres.,  
 Bristol.
- Carpenter, W. B.*, M.D.
- Carpenter, Rev. J.  
 Estlin, Bristol.
- Charley, T. W.*, M.P.
- \**Chorlton, T. W.*, Man-  
 chester.
- Clarke, Miss, Edinburgh.
- \**Cobbe, Miss Frances*  
 Power, London.
- \**Courtney, Leonard*, Esq.,  
 London.
- Coleridge, Sir J. D.* (Lord  
 Coleridge) (Counsel,  
 Court of Com. Pleas).



- \*Colman, Mrs. Mill.  
*Craig, Miss*, Edin-  
 burgh.  
*Craig, Miss A.*, Edin-  
 burgh.  
*Crosskey, Rev. H.*  
 Crosskey, Mrs.  
*Crudelius, Mrs.*, Edin-  
 burgh.
- \*Davies, Rev. Llewelyn.  
 \*Davies, Miss Emily.  
*Denman, Hon. Geo.*, M.P.,  
 spoke in House of  
 Commons, July '69.  
 Dilke, Sir Charles W.,  
 M.P.  
 Edwards, Matilda Be-  
 tham.  
*Edwards, Amelia Bar-  
 bara.*
- \*Estlin, Miss, Treas.,  
 Bristol  
*Fawcett, Prof. H.*, M.P.,  
 House of Commons,  
 May '67, 17th July  
 '69.  
 \*Fawcett, Mrs., 17th  
 July '69.  
 \*Garrett, Miss Elizabeth  
 (Mrs. Anderson).  
*Gillies, Miss Margaret.*
- Gloyne, Mrs.*, Manchester.  
 \*Goldsmid, Lady.  
*Grote, George*, Esq.  
*Grote, Mrs.*  
*Gurney, Rt. Hon. Russell*,  
 M.P. (Teller 1867).  
*Guthrie, Rev. Thomas*,  
 D.D.  
 Hallett—see Ashworth.  
*Hampson, Mrs.*  
*Hare, Thomas*, Esq., July  
 '69.  
 \*Hare, Miss (Mrs. West-  
 lake), London.  
 \*Haslam, Mrs. J. T.  
 Hastings, George, Lon-  
 don.  
 Hertford, Rev. W. H.,  
 Oct. '68.  
*Heywood, J.*, F.R.S., Oct.  
 '68, Dec. '69.  
*Hill, Mr. Recorder  
 Matthew Davenport.*  
 \*Hill, Miss Davenport.  
 \*Hill, Miss Florence  
 Davenport.  
*Hill, Sir Rowland.*  
*Hodgson, W. B.*, LL.D.  
*Home, Mrs. Ferguson*,  
 of Bassendean, Edin-  
 burgh.

- Hopwood, C. H., Q.C.,  
Dec. '69.
- Houghton, Lord*, Chair.,  
July '69.
- Howitt, Mrs.*
- Jameson, Mrs.*
- Jenkinson, Sir George.*
- Jones, Ernest*, Oct. '68.
- Johnson, Miss Mary*  
(Mrs. Feast), Hon.  
Sec., Birmingham.
- Johnson, Mrs. G. B.,  
Birmingham.
- Keary, Misses A. M. and*  
*Eliza.*
- Kingsley, Rev. Charles*,  
17th July '69.
- \*Kinnear, J. Boyd, Esq.,  
17th July '69.
- Knox, Mrs. (Isa Craig),  
London.
- Kyllmann, Mrs. Max,  
Manchester.
- Langton, Lady Anna*  
*Gore.*
- Lankester, Edwin*, M.D.
- Lemmi, Mrs., Edinburgh.
- Lloyd, Dr.*, Bir'ham.
- Lloyd, Miss*, London.
- Low, Mrs.*, Edinburgh.
- Lucas, Mrs. S.*, London.
- M'Laren, Duncan*, Esq.,  
M.P., Chair., 17th Jan.  
'70.
- \*M'Laren, Mrs., Pres.,  
Edinburgh.
- \*M'Laren, Miss Agnes  
(Dr.), Edinburgh.
- M'Queen, Mrs. (of Brox-  
hill), Edinburgh.
- \*Manning, Miss E. A.  
*Martineau, Miss Harriet.*
- \**Martineau, Dr. James.*
- Masson, Prof., 7th July  
'69, 17th Jan. '70.
- Myers, Fred. W. H.,  
14th April '68.
- Mill, John Stuart*, M.P.,  
July '69 (Parliamentary  
Leader, Teller).
- Moore, Mrs. R. R.,  
Manchester.
- Newman, Prof. T. W.*,  
Hon. Sec., Bristol.
- Nichol, Mrs. Pease*, Edin-  
burgh.
- \*Nightingale, Miss Flor-  
ence.
- \*Norris, J. F., Q.C., Bristol.
- Pankhurst, Dr.*
- Parkes, Miss Bessie Ray-  
ner (Madame Belloc).

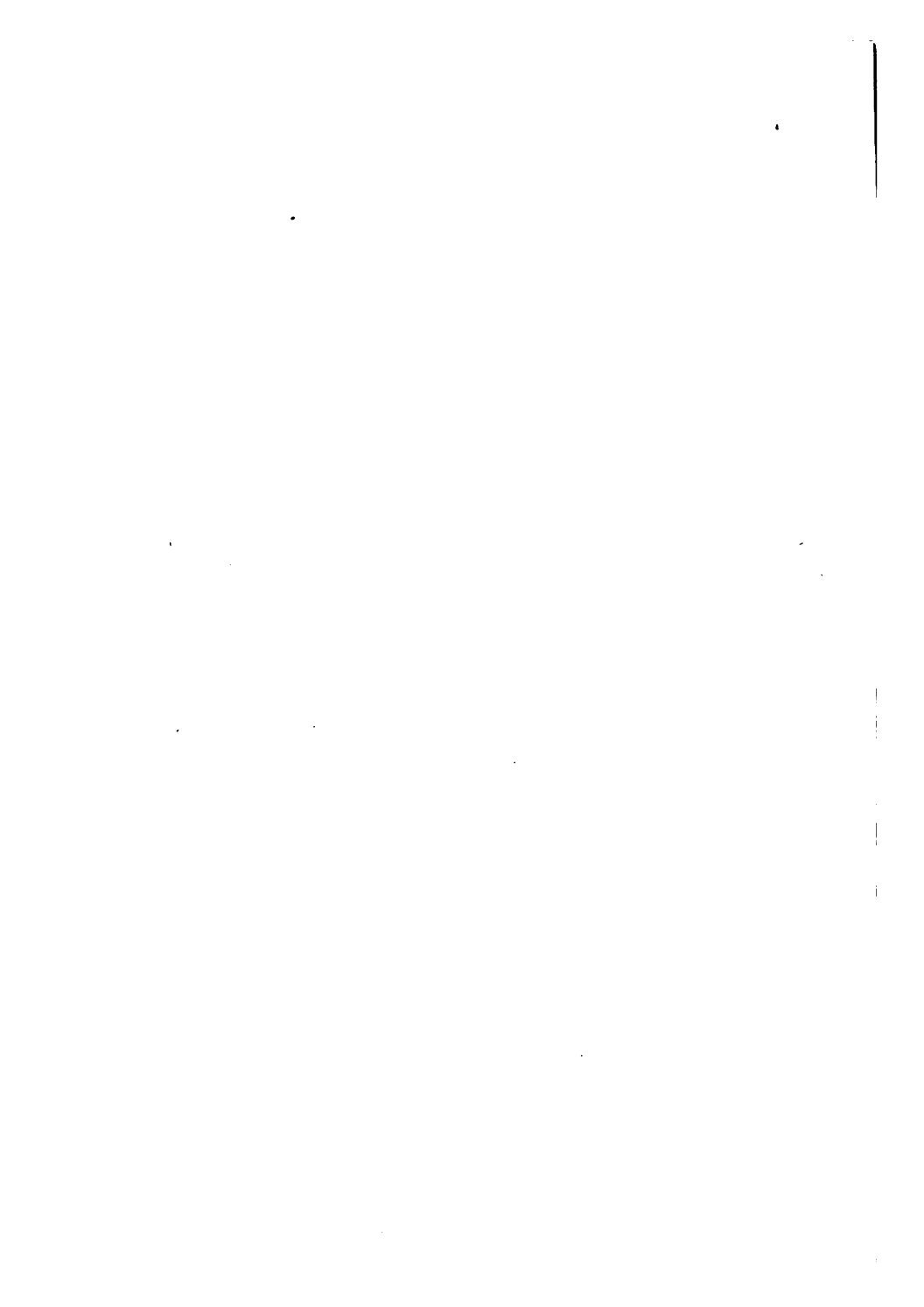
- Playfair, Prof. Lyon*,  
M.P., 17th Jan. '70.
- Pochin, Henry Davies*,  
Esq., Ch., 12th April  
'68.
- \**Pochin, Mrs.*, April  
'68.
- Potter, T. B.*, M.P., April  
'68.
- \**Priestman, Miss A. M.*
- \**Priestman, Miss Mary*.
- Ramsay, Miss (Mrs. Laye)*, Bristol
- Riddel, Miss*, Edinburgh.
- Robertson, Miss Annie*,  
Dublin, 14th April  
'68.
- Rusdon, R. D.*, Esq., Man-  
chester.
- Rylands, Peter*, M.P.,  
Dec. '69.
- Sandford, Ven. Arch-  
deacon*, 14th April '68,  
May '68.
- Sandwith, Humphrey*  
*C. B.*
- Shaen, Messrs. & Roscoe*,  
Solicitors to W.S.S.,  
London.
- Smith, Mrs. J. W.*, Hon.  
Sec., London.
- Smith, Barbara Leigh*—  
see Bodichon.
- Somerville, Mrs.*
- Stansfeld, James*, M.P.,  
17th July '69.
- Stansfeld, Mrs.*, Lon-  
don.
- \**Steinthal, Rev. S. A.*,  
Manchester.
- \**Stevenson, Miss Eliza*,  
Edinburgh.
- \**Sturge, Miss Eliza*, Bir-  
mingham.
- Sutcliffe, Mrs.*, Man-  
chester.
- Symonds, J. A.*, M.D.  
(of Bristol).
- Taylor, Miss Helen*.
- Taylor, P. A.*, M.P., 17th  
July '69.
- Taylor, Mrs. P. A.*,  
Treas., London, Chair.  
July '69.
- Taylor, Mr. William*,  
Birmingham.
- \**Taylor, Mrs. William*,  
Birmingham.
- Temple, Fred.*, D.D.  
(Archbishop of Can-  
terbury).
- \**Thomasson, Mrs. J. P.*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><i>Turner, J. P.</i>, Birmingham.</p> <p>*<i>Tyndale, Mrs.</i>, Birmingham.</p> <p><i>Wallace, Dr.</i>, July '69, Jan. '70.</p> <p><i>Warren, Mrs.</i>, Edinburgh.</p> <p><i>Wedderburn, Sir David</i>, M.P., July '69.</p> <p><i>Wedgwood, Mrs. Hen-sleigh</i>, London.</p> <p>*<i>Westlake, John</i>, Q.C.</p> | <p><i>Westlake, Mrs.</i> — see Hare.</p> <p><i>Whitworth, Benjamin</i>, Dec. '69.</p> <p><i>Wigham, Mrs.</i>, Edinburgh.</p> <p><i>Wigham, Miss Eliza</i>, Edinburgh.</p> <p><i>Wilson, Miss Alice</i>, Manchester.</p> <p><i>Winkworth, Susannah</i>.</p> <p><i>Wolstenholm, Miss (Mrs. Elmy)</i>.</p> |
|---|---|

Such were the men and women who had rallied to the movement what time the Bill for removing the electoral disabilities of women first came before the House of Commons.

1870 to 1884.]

	Divisions.		Majority.	Notes.
	For.	Against.		
Text of Bill read in Committee	91		33 in favour.	} These two divisions added 82 to the total of known friends. 42 new friends added. 18 pairs brought the ayes up to 160.
"That in consequence of the Committee	220		126 against.	
"and read in Committee	220		69 "	
"which read in Committee	222		79 "	
"the Committee read in Committee	222		67 "	
<b>PARLIAMENT</b>				
Bill introduced in Committee	187		35 "	} Mr. John Bright's speech told heavily against the Bill.
and introduced in Committee	239		87 "	
to Parliament in 1878, read out.	220		80 "	
"That in consequence of the Committee	217		114 "	} This year there was a systematic canvass against the Bill.
"which read in Committee				
<b>PARLIAMENT</b>				
Bill introduced.				
Day on which resolution set down taken by Government.				
"That in consequence of the Committee resolution stood first, but Committee on Arrears of Rent Bill				
"proposed continued till past midnight—and the resolution was withdrawn.				
"the				
Moved by	130		16 against.	There were 45 pairs.
Motion in second reading	271		136 "	
"New clause				
"elect				
"the				
Bill introduced				
"For all the				
"to see				
"as to whether leave be given to bring in the Bill. Ayes, 29;				
"elect, 8; majority, 21.				
"Provided reading deferred.				
"wom				
"elect				



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE PARLIAMENT OF 1870 TO 1873.

#### § 20. *The Advance Guard.*

THE session of 1870 found the Women's Suffrage organization in full working order. The plan of an organ for the movement had been long and carefully discussed between Miss Becker and Miss Boucherett, and finally the first issue of the *Women's Suffrage Journal* appeared in March 1870. The journal was edited by Miss Becker, and carried on by her with loving care and strenuous exactness during the rest of her life. The volumes of the *Women's Suffrage Journal* are the sources whence the student can draw information with absolute reliance on its exactness. On that journal Miss Becker bestowed an amount of anxious labour, which at times seemed to her friends too great a strain on her—but as she herself said of it, it was “like a child” to her. She realized the value of a continuous record, better than perhaps any of her colleagues could do—a record which served to keep the workers in touch, which gave the cue to their common policy, and was a ready reference for Members

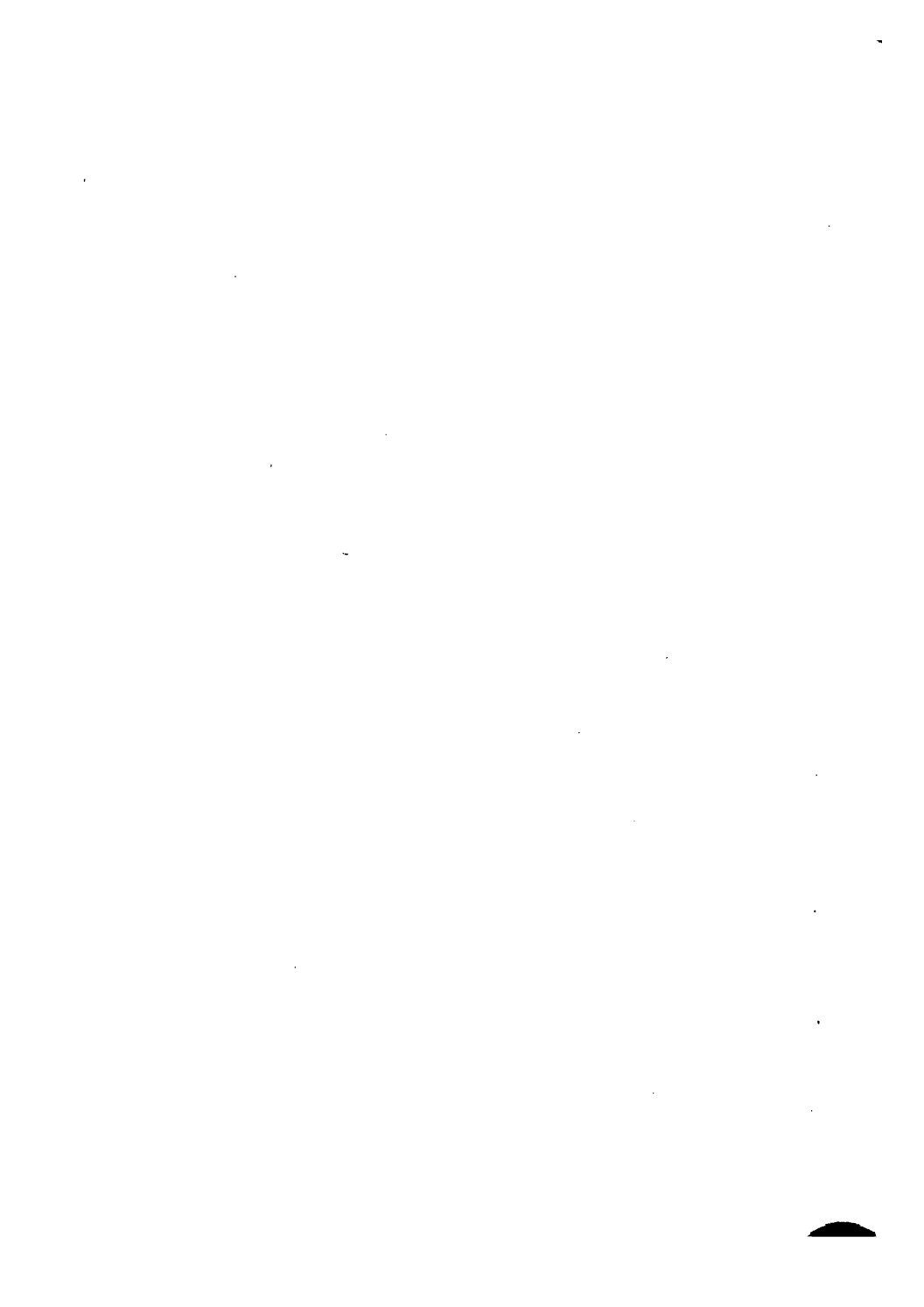
of Parliament and others engaged in political questions. The *Women's Suffrage Journal* has preserved an unbroken record of every step of the movement for the twenty years during which it was carried on.

This year found the Committees in London, Manchester, Edinburgh, Bristol, Birmingham, established on a firm basis, while local Committees were springing up in many places, under the lead of some energetic worker, with a view to promoting local work in connection with the larger centres, to which they contributed many valuable permanent correspondents.

Some early pioneer workers were drawn off to the special provinces of women's progress with which they had been originally identified; thus Mrs. Bodichon and Miss Davies became absorbed in the foundation of Girton College; Miss Elizabeth Garrett in the pursuit of the medical career. But new recruits were not lacking, drawn in by the centripetal force of a movement, which in its turn gave out force to help every effort for opening the gates of enterprise and possibilities of public service for women.

It was a period marked by an intensity and unity of action then without a parallel amongst women—at least women in secular life. These hitherto had laboured in isolation, each leavening her own sphere of influence only: the period of associated action had now set in, bringing along with it new ties of friendship and common interest for the common good, between men and women as well as between women themselves.







THE RIGHT HON. JACOB BRIGHT, M.P.

§ 21. *The First Bill.*

The *Women's Suffrage Journal*, in its first number, sent forth the note of preparation for a direct appeal to the House of Commons by means of a Bill for extending the franchise to women. Its opening article testifies to the store set at that time on petitions, and quotes a statement made on one occasion by Mr. Disraeli, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, that "there was no right really more valuable than the right of petition, nor could any opinion be more erroneous than that which supposed it to be a mere form. Because the petitions presented did not now lead to discussion, it was supposed that the House did not attend to them, but the fact was not so. Opinions expressed in petitions had great influence on the judgment of the House." At the time the journal started, 20,166 signatures had already been sent in, and by the end of the session of 1870 the total rose to 134,561, a number which was increased year by year for several years. Several meetings had already been held that year, which, though not distinguishable in character from hosts of meetings held in after years, have nevertheless that special interest which attaches to the early beginnings of great endeavours. The first resolution pledging support to the actually drafted Bill, was the annual meeting of the Edinburgh Women's Suffrage Society (in Queen Street Hall, 17th January), when Sir David Wedderburn, M.P., moved "that this meeting rejoice to learn that Mr. Jacob Bright and Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke have agreed to bring in a Bill, during the ensuing session of Parliament, to remove

the electoral disabilities under which women now suffer, and this meeting resolve to use their utmost efforts to support the measure." Mr. Duncan M'Laren, M.P., presided at this meeting, which was also addressed by Mr. Jacob Bright, M.P., Prof. Calderwood, Prof. Masson, and several other gentlemen. A resolution of similar character was also carried (4th February) at a meeting in the Athenæum, Bristol, where Prof. F. W. Newman, Prof. Sheldon Amos and Mr. F. W. H. Myers, also Mr., now Judge, Norris took part. No ladies, it may be noted, took part in either of these meetings, which in that respect stand almost alone in the annals of the movement, for the ladies who threw themselves into this work knew well that the claim came most effectively when women came forward to ask it on behalf of other women; they felt, to use the words of the President of the Bristol and West of England Society, Viscountess Amberley, "that if there is anything unwomanly in the fact of urging on others that which we earnestly believe to be true, we had better never have had feelings, for feelings without action will be but a fetter and millstone round our necks."<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Peter Taylor presided at a great meeting in the Hanover Square Rooms on March 20th, just after the Bill had been introduced into Parliament, when a resolution was carried—"That this meeting is of opinion that the extension of the franchise to women will tend to promote amongst them a more cogent sense of their special

<sup>1</sup> Lecture in the Assembly Rooms, Stroud, 25th May 1870. This lecture was published in the *Fortnightly Review*, and afterwards reprinted as a pamphlet.

duties as citizens, and of their general responsibilities as concerned with the advancement of the highest moral interest of the whole community." This was moved and seconded by Mr. J. S. Mill and Prof. Cairnes, supported by Mrs. George Grote, wife of the historian, who said she had never been engaged in any work in which her feelings were more completely seconded by her reason than this. She had always felt that the arguments against women's franchise were so feeble and limited and ineffective, that it was a wonder they were ever put forth. Another resolution, expressing satisfaction with the Bill, was moved with what, at this distance of time, may be termed prophetic appropriateness, by Mrs. Fawcett, who only three days before had made her first speech in public at the Town Hall, Brighton, where the largest audience hitherto seen in that hall had gathered to hear the wife of their newly elected member lecture on the electoral disabilities of women. In that lecture Mrs. Fawcett marshalled all the objections urged against the measure under thirteen heads, which to this day continue an exhaustive classification of the armoury of the opposition.

The friends of the movement in Ireland were also alert, and on April 18th—thanks to the exertions of Miss J. A. Robertson—an influential gathering met in the Molesworth Hall, Dublin—Sir Robert Kane presiding—to hear a lecture from Mrs. Fawcett. Prof. Fawcett also took part, and much impetus was given to the petition work in Ireland.

On May 4th the Bill "For the Removal of the Electoral Disabilities of Women" came on for second

reading. Mr. Jacob Bright moved the second reading, and Mr. Bouverie moved the "previous question." The events which followed were "surprising both to the friends and opponents of the cause."

The debate was carried on with much force of logic and earnestness by Mr. Jacob Bright, whose speech was one which encouraged friends and disarmed opponents—he was followed by Dr. Lyon Playfair, Sir Charles Dilke, Col. Sykes, Sir George Jenkinson and Mr. Muntz. The opponents made sentimental objections, but did not condescend to reason. At last Mr. Secretary Bruce rose on behalf of the Government. After explaining that there were occasions when a member of the Government felt with great regret that he could not give an independent vote, he went on to say that Her Majesty's Government had not had time to give the subject full consideration in all its bearings. He would ask the House to delay the consideration of the measure, because it was a very large question and required mature consideration. On being put to the vote, the second reading was carried by 124 to 91, a majority of 33 in its favour. The Bill went into Committee on May 12th: it was reached at a very late hour. Mr. Bouverie moved that it be committed that day six months; the promoters relied on the verdict already given and the burden of the debate fell on the opponents. At 1.30 a.m. Mr. Eastwick moved the adjournment of the debate. Mr. Newdigate contended that the House was perfectly prepared to deal with the question at once. Mr. Gladstone said: "I think I may say, for most of my colleagues as well as myself, that we felt something more than surprise—that we felt disappoint-

ment—at the result arrived at on Wednesday last. We do not attempt to limit the freedom of any one on such a subject, either within the official body or elsewhere; but undoubtedly it is an opinion prevailing among us—and one which I for one strongly entertain, in common with all those now sitting near me—that it would be a very great mistake to carry this Bill into law.”

The Bill was rejected by 220 to 94.

Commenting on these two contradictory verdicts, the *Women's Suffrage Journal* points out that the first was given free from pressure of any kind, even from that of constituents—it was given purely on the merits of the case; but the second division was taken under widely different conditions. “Instead of the previous question the opponents now moved the direct negative to the motion for going into Committee. Instead of permitting freedom of action to his colleagues, Mr. Gladstone forbade all of them who were in favour of the Bill to vote with Mr. Bright, while not only were those members who were opposed to it allowed to vote, but every man within reach of the Treasury whip received an urgent summons to attend and vote us down. . . . It is therefore lost for this session, but it will be heard of again.”

The Women's Suffrage Societies immediately called a conference, at Aubrey House, Notting Hill—the residence of Mr. P. A. Taylor, M.P. Mr. Jacob Bright took the chair, and it was resolved to reintroduce the Bill next year.

The Married Women's Property Bill occupied the main attention of those engaged in the women's

movement during the remainder of that session, as will be seen by reference to the letters from Miss Becker.

The year 1870 is also memorable for the passing of Mr. Forster's Elementary Education Act. Manchester was the first city to hold an election under this new Act, and on November 24th Miss Becker was elected a member of the Board, being thus the first woman in this country who has been elected to a seat on an administrative council by the suffrages of a great popular constituency.

### § 22. *Early Hopes.*

The year 1871 was one of much activity: meetings were held in many places, and again Scotland led the way with a large meeting in the Music Hall, Edinburgh, which was addressed by Mr. John Stuart Mill. Miss Taylour and Miss Agnes M'Laren began a long course of lectures throughout Scotland. Twenty of these meetings were held in March and April, and it can scarcely be doubted that they largely contributed to the preponderance of votes for the Bill given that year by Scottish members. Had Scotland alone been concerned, the Bill would have been carried.

That spring Mrs. Fawcett went, at the request of the Bristol and West of England Committee, to Bath, where, as the guest of Miss Liliashworth, she made her first acquaintance with the beautiful home on the Claverton heights, which became as a haven of rest for many and many a future visitor in the work—a haven whither they turned then, and turn still, for the





(LILIAS S. ASHWORTH) MRS. HALLETT. (From a photograph  
about 1874.)



{MRS. HENRY FAWCETT (MILLCENT GARRETT). (From a photograph  
about 1870.)



rest that comes of wise counsel and harmonious life—only the welcome of two sisters has been exchanged in the later years, for the welcome of husband and wife.

After the meeting at Bath Mrs. Fawcett and Miss Liliash Ashworth made a tour to Exeter, Plymouth and Devonport. Of that visit Mrs. L. Ashworth Hallett writes:—

“It was in March 1871 that Mrs. Fawcett came to the West of England, to fulfil a promise to give addresses at six or seven meetings which I had undertaken to organize. These meetings were held at Frome,—for which borough Mr. T. Hughes (‘Tom Brown’) was then member,—at Bath, Bristol, Exeter, Taunton, Plymouth and Tavistock. Professor Fawcett was then member for Brighton, and the glamour of his name, and the wonder that the wife of a Member of Parliament should consent to appear as a platform speaker, secured us influential support everywhere except at Taunton. I had never met her before, and can always recall her girlish figure when she stepped out of the train at Bath station.

“At Exeter we were received by Sir John and Lady Bowring. He had kindly consented to preside at the meeting. The Bishop (now Archbishop of Canterbury) sent a message of sympathy, and his sister, Miss Temple, came to support us at the meeting. Mr. W. F. Collier very kindly arranged the meetings at Plymouth and Tavistock, and secured other influential local support.

“At Taunton we had advertised our meeting without a chairman, trusting to finding one when we arrived ;

but on calling upon some of the leading men we found they would have nothing to do with our cause. We retired to our room at the hotel, and Mrs. Fawcett declared that, in our perplexity, *I* must take the chair, as it would not do to be without a chairman. I was busy arranging a suitable speech for the emergency, when a gentleman, who had refused us, suddenly appeared—a well-known local gentleman, Mr. D. Badcock, bailiff of the borough. He said he could not allow Mrs. Fawcett to be left without local support and had come to say he would preside. I hope, if he is still living, he may learn that his courage and kindness have, after thirty years, not been forgotten.

“At several meetings of this first series, cheers were called for by the audience for Professor Fawcett, because of his unselfish kindness in sparing his wife,—on whom he was so specially dependent,—to go forth and plead for this new gospel. It was felt that there must be deep meaning in a cause which could thus command his sympathy.

“Two other series of meetings are still fresh in my memory during the year 1872,—one set in Gloucester and Herefordshire with Rhoda and Agnes Garrett. Rhoda Garrett will rank among the most remarkable of the early speakers. The other series were held in boroughs in South Wales, with Caroline Biggs.

“It was evident that the audiences always came expecting to see curious masculine objects walking on to the platform, and when we appeared, with our quiet black dresses, the whole expression of the faces of the audience would instantly change. I shall never forget

the thrill which passed through us when, on one occasion, a Nonconformist minister assured the audience in his speech from the chair, that we 'were quite respectable'—meaning to convey that we were people with some position, and not merely seeking notoriety or earning money by our speaking.

“On one occasion, in a remote borough constituency, however, it was evident that groups of people had come with the fixed intention of sneering at the speakers, and the audience was in a state of amusement at our expense. One of the ladies, with an appearance of great diffidence, which was really felt, came forward and told the meeting that, had she been a man, she would have had a number of votes for members of Parliament, as she happened to possess some property in several constituencies. This statement entirely disarmed the meeting. They seemed at once to realize that there was a strong grievance, and gave a most respectful hearing for the rest of the evening.

“When making a tour of meetings, it was our custom to call at the newspaper office, the day of the meeting, and ask the editor to give a report. The lengths of the reports in the papers of thirty years ago are remarkable. Once an amusing incident occurred. When we called to see the editor in a small country-town constituency, he said he entirely disapproved of ladies speaking and of the movement, and that he would give no report or come near the meeting. We retired from his presence with as much dignity as our sore feelings would permit. The meeting was crowded and sympathetic, and in the middle of the proceedings we

perceived the editor slyly creep in and hide himself in the middle of the throng. The lady who spoke after this incident, ended her address by telling the story of this interview with the editor in an amusing and charitable spirit, and ended by wishing that he could have been with them that night, when he might have been carried away by the spirit of the meeting, and even be brought to look more favourably on women speakers. This brought down the house; the audience cheered and shouted, 'He is here; we have him here.' Whereupon the editor, greatly moved, came out from the crowd, amid renewed excitement and applause. He said he wished to join in the vote of thanks to the ladies—he had never heard ladies speak before, and could not help thinking that those who could be so interesting and amusing on a platform, must be very pleasant, good comrades to live with at home.

"This old borough is now lost in the county. The generous editor has long since passed away, and possibly the newspaper has ceased to exist.

"The meetings of thirty years ago no doubt gained many votes in Parliament. A largely attended meeting, with some good local support, in a small borough constituency, carried great influence with the member. The relative value of meetings was, of course, greatly altered when the redistribution of seats took place.

"The novelty of hearing women speakers brought crowds to the meetings. Invariably the doors were thronged with people unable to obtain seats. The tours of meetings, consisting of six or seven in a fortnight, were a great nervous effort in those early days. They





**VISCOUNTESS AMBERLEY and her little girl RACHEL RUSSELL.**  
(From a photograph in 1872.)



were, however, a source of much interest, and even of pleasure in the retrospect, for we never failed to carry our resolutions affirming the principle of the suffrage and adopting petitions to Parliament. Occasionally an amendment would be moved, but nowhere was it ever carried.

“Viscountess Amberley was another notable pioneer. She and Lord Amberley had paid a visit to J. S. Mill at Avignon, and Mill had persuaded them that it would be of great value to the cause if a lady in her position would speak at some meeting. This led Lady Amberley to become President of the Bristol and West of England Society, and to her presiding at a meeting in the Broadmead Rooms (now pulled down) at Bristol in February 1872. Her early death from diphtheria—caused by devotion to her little girl Rachel, who died of the same disease—removed a valuable speaker and notable personality. She was daughter of Henrietta Maria, Lady Stanley of Alderley (one of the remarkable women of our time), and married Viscount Amberley, eldest son of Lord John Russell (Earl Russell).

“Another speaker of note in the west country was Lady Anna Gore Langton, who became President of the Bath Branch of the Suffrage Society, January 1872, and acted as delegate to the Central Committee (London). She became President of the Bristol and West of England Society after the death of Lady Amberley. Her speaking was thoroughly practical, and carried with it great earnestness and conviction—perhaps it was all the more convincing because it was quiet and unassuming. Her fine presence and noble face lent great

dignity to all she said. Her comparatively early death was a great loss to the cause. In her will she bequeathed £1000 to Girton College, Cambridge. Had she lived, she would have inherited the Earldom of Temple, which passed to her son on the death of her brother, the last Duke of Buckingham.

“The following extracts from newspapers during those early years may convey to the present generation something of the effect made upon the public mind by the extraordinary innovation of women speakers. Looking through a pile of old newspapers, I see these comments:—

“‘The room was densely crowded—drawn thither by the announcement that feminine man, viz., three ladies, were to fight the cause. This they did right manfully, yet, withal, in a most clear, lucid and persuasive manner, without the least vulgarism.’

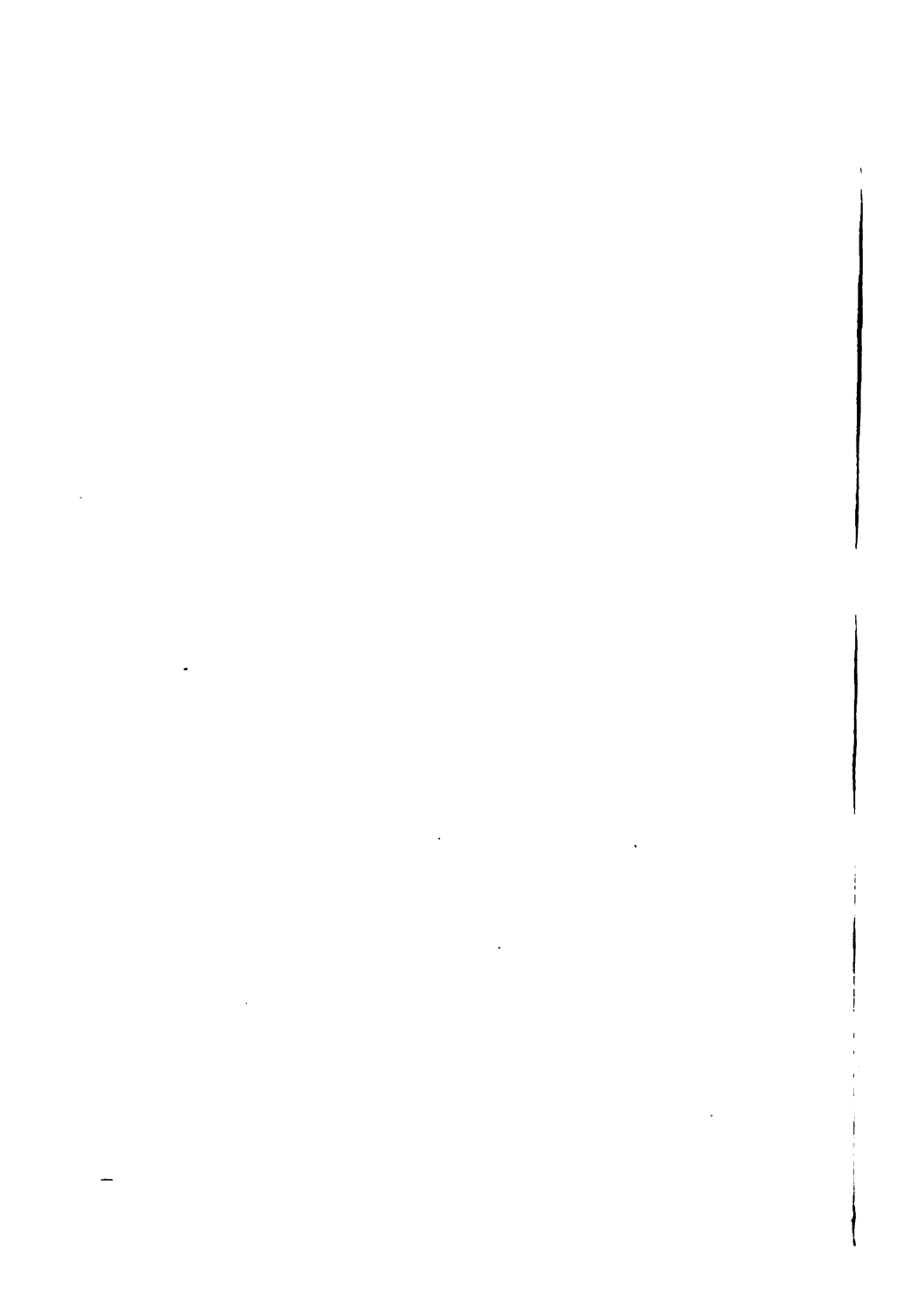
“‘Few ladies have courage Amazonian enough to brave the publicity of meetings.’ At one meeting a clergyman arose and said ‘it was forbidden by Holy Scripture for women to speak or take part in public affairs.’ After a heated discussion, a gentleman rose and said that his grandmother was a Quakeress and spoke constantly in Quaker churches, adding, ‘Let anyone prove, who can, that she transgressed the laws of God or man.’ A resolution of thanks to the ladies was passed ‘for their *heroism* in giving such able and interesting speeches.’

“Another paper says: ‘Whether we agree or not, we admire the courage of the ladies, who have given an intellectual treat.’

“Another paper, referring to Lady Anna Gore Langton, says: ‘Her ladyship’s position in the chair, and the



LADY ANNA GORE LANGTON.



ladies by whom she was surrounded, was a proof of the highest moral courage.'

"After conceding the intellectual capability and moral courage of the ladies, there yet lingered for a long time the doubt as to their physical capacity—viz., whether their voices were really fit for the strain. This doubt lingered so late as 1877. A great meeting was held that year in St. James' Hall, London, presided over by the late Lord Houghton. The following was a newspaper comment: 'We hope the gentlemen will not be offended or cast down if we say that they were much less distinctly heard than the ladies. There is a quality in the female voice which seems to carry it further with less effort than the organ of the stronger sex.'

"Among the changes in the position of women during the last half of the reign of our Queen, none is more striking than this of public speaking. As I passed through Bath the other day, I noticed the walls covered with two great placards—one set announced a meeting to be presided over by a duchess; the other announced a great political party meeting to be presided over by a countess. Nobody saw anything remarkable in this enlargement of woman's sphere; but my mind instinctively travelled back to the days when women, moved by the sense of great injustice, undaunted by scorn and sneers, went forth to speak the thing they knew, and to plead for their sex a fair field and no favour."

Such were some of the earliest experiences of public meetings when women had as yet taken no prominent part in the general political party work of the country.

All through the session petitions had continued to

pour in, bringing up the total at the time of the debate to 185,000. A few days before the debate took place a circular was issued, summoning the Women's Suffrage workers to a Conference in the following terms:—

“The Committees of London, Edinburgh, Dublin, Manchester, Birmingham, and the West of England earnestly invite your presence at a Conference to be held in London on Friday, the 28th inst.

“On the 3rd of May Mr. Jacob Bright will propose the second reading of the ‘Bill to remove the Electoral Disabilities of Women,’ and we call this Conference as a means of bringing together the friends of the cause from every part of the United Kingdom, in order to strengthen the hands of our supporters in the House of Commons at this critical time, and to discuss the means to be employed in aid of the progress of the Bill.

“Last year, in face of petitions from more than 130,000 British subjects, and a considerable Parliamentary majority in favour of the second reading of the Bill, Mr. Gladstone declared in the House of Commons that ‘he saw neither desire nor demand for this measure,’ and the whole force of the Government was exerted against our cause.

“We desire to call upon our adherents everywhere to protest against the hostile attitude assumed by a Government professing to be Liberal and to be based on household suffrage.

“An influential deputation from the Conference will wait upon Mr. Gladstone to present a Memorial pressing for the immediate extension of the electoral franchise to women householders and ratepayers.

“The Conference will meet at the Langham Hotel, Regent Street. The chair will be taken at two o'clock p.m.

“MENTIA TAYLOR, Hon. Sec., London.

“AGNES M'LAREN, Hon. Sec., Edinburgh.

“ANNIE ROBERTSON, Hon. Sec., Dublin.

“LYDIA E. BECKER, Hon. Sec., Manchester.

“ELIZA M. STURGE, Hon. Sec., Birmingham.

“LILLIAS S. ASHWORTH, } Hon. Secs., Bristol

“ELIZABETH P. RAMSAY, } and West of England.

“April 15th, 1871.”

A memorial was conveyed from this Conference to Mr. Gladstone, setting forth the constitutional basis of the claim and signed by 2000 women, the first amongst them being:

Florence Nightingale.

Harriet Martineau.

Mary Carpenter.

Frances Power Cobbe.

Augusta Webster.

Anna Louisa Chisholm.

On May 3rd Mr. Bright, for the second time, introduced his Bill; and for the second time Mr. Bouverie carried 220 votes against it with him into the lobby; but Mr. Bright's following had increased to 151, and the hostile majority had fallen to 69. An analysis of the division list showed that 122 constituencies were clearly ranged in favour, amongst them being all five of the three-membered boroughs, the chief centres of political activity, viz., Birmingham, Glasgow, Liverpool, Leeds, Manchester. Moreover, Mr. Gladstone's tone of decided opposition had greatly modified; he had spoken

apparently in favour of the principle. Thus there was much justification for the bright hopefulness with which the leading article of the *Women's Suffrage Journal* concludes: "We have but to persevere in our efforts in order to reap a speedy reward, and we may look forward with a reasonable hope that the moral victory of last month will be converted into a numerical victory when next Mr. Jacob Bright asks the assent of the House of Commons to the second reading of the Women's Disabilities Bill."

"The hopes expressed in our letters in those days would read idiotic now," said one of the "old gang," in this year 1900. But, ah! no. Not so—it is as true for the life of a cause, as for the life of a soul, that:

". . . tasks in hours of insight will'd  
Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled."

§ 23. *The Session of 1872—Formation of Central Committee.*

The encouragement to the suffrage party in 1871 naturally aroused extra exertions on the part of the opponents in the following session. A whip was sent round.

"*Women's Suffrage.*—You are earnestly requested to be in the House on Wednesday, May 1st, not later than four o'clock, to vote against the second reading of the Women's Suffrage Bill. *Division certain.*

"E. P. BOUVERIE.                      J. H. SCOURFIELD.  
"A. J. BERESFORD HOPE.      HENRY JAMES."



This whip told with more instant effect on doubtful votes than all the 330,000 signatures of men and women, from all parts of the United Kingdom, who petitioned for the passing of the Bill, and than all the one hundred and fifty meetings that had been held during the previous winter and spring. Even then the list of supporters was longer than that of 1871; for though, as will be seen by the Parliamentary chart, the figures of the division were less favourable, the addition of eighteen pairs brought the total of friendly members to the increased total of 160.

Turning from Parliament to the work outside, the most important sign of progress was the formation, in 1872, of a Central Committee in London, in accordance with the wish expressed by Mr. Jacob Bright at a Conference of Friends of Women's Suffrage, in the Mayor's Parlour, Manchester, in the previous November. At that Conference Mr. Bright had said: "Any Member of Parliament who has a Bill before the House, especially if it be for a popular object, knows very well how important it is to have an energetic support from the country; and during the last session of Parliament, when I was looking forward to the second reading of the Women's Disabilities Bill, I felt strongly the want of a body in London, representing all the various Associations, which could produce some agitation there, and take the various means which we know are taken to influence members. Well, this was very difficult, as there was no Central Association. There was a London Committee, a Manchester Committee, a Dublin Committee, a Bristol Committee, and so on; but there was no Association

representing all these Committees, and therefore there was no one, as it were, to arrange anything, or to adopt such political action as was necessary at the time. Yet, in spite of this difficulty, a very influential Conference was called in London, largely attended by ladies, and chiefly addressed by ladies; and the members of this Conference, being in London, used what influence they could with such Members of Parliament as they knew. All that was very important, and I have no doubt whatever that the number of those who voted for the second reading of the Bill was increased by the action which was then taken. What we want now is, if possible, to have a standing Central Committee. The object of this Committee is solely that we may, as it were, pour all our divergent streams into it for particular work on particular occasions; and I must say that, having this Bill in hand in the House of Commons, I have greatly felt the necessity of such an organization; and I doubt very much whether we shall ever succeed in this cause until we unite our forces in that way for the particular objects to which I have referred."

The proposal met with approval from the provincial Societies—only the London dissented. This they did for reasons which they thus expressed in a circular to their members: "We hold it to be important that no person conspicuously engaged, either as officer or as lecturer, in some other agitations now proceeding, to which we will not further allude, should hold any conspicuous place in the movement for Women's Suffrage." The fear was not entirely without groundwork, as the names of the provisional honorary secretaries of the pro-

posed Central Committee were conspicuously associated with another agitation. At the same time the fear was needless, for the leaders of the Women's Suffrage policy were all fully conscious of the importance, not to say necessity, of keeping the Women's Suffrage agitation on its own distinct and separate basis. The circular just quoted disclaimed any unfriendly or personal feeling in the matter; "but we have arrived deliberately at the opinion that it would be better that two Committees should co-exist than that one only should exist, exposed to the reasonable dissatisfaction of those friends of Women's Suffrage strongly opposed to some other movements now on foot: inasmuch as, if there existed no executive body entirely disconnected with those other movements, many friends of Women's Suffrage might find themselves compelled to withdraw their support."

Accordingly, for a while, two Societies worked in London. The Central Committee, which was formally constituted at a meeting at the Langham Hotel on January 17th, took an office at 9 Berners Street, in the premises of the Berners Club for Ladies—the then solitary forerunner of the now numerous women's clubs. The "Old London" continued its separate existence for a few years—Mrs. Wm. Burbury acting as honorary secretary. It did some useful local work, chiefly by lectures; but in 1877, by the good offices of Mr. Leonard Courtney, it amalgamated with the Central Society, the objections felt by its members having disappeared with the lapse of time.

§ 24. *Work for the Bill.*

In December a Conference was held in Birmingham, attended by delegates from all the Women's Suffrage Societies, as well as by an influential contingent of supporters in Birmingham. Mrs. Robert Feast—who, as Miss Johnson, had been the first Secretary of the Birmingham Committee—presided. A paper was read by Mrs. Arthur Arnold on the general claim of women, followed by one from Miss Becker on "The Future of the Women's Suffrage Movement," showing the position, under the three aspects, of:—the alterations in the legal and social position of women which would be effected by the possession of the franchise; the probable course of the movement in the longer or shorter time that must elapse before the Bill became law; the course to be adopted in the immediate future. Under this last head their object must be worked for in four distinct directions: the Government, the opposition, the House of Commons, and the country. The paper then went on to discuss practical suggestions for work in each of these directions, and concluded by indicating the political possibilities on the then horizon in words which gave the cue to the work and hopes of the next ten years.

"There are rumours abroad of the prospect of a new Reform Bill, the main provision of which is to be the extension of the principle of household suffrage to the counties. In anticipation of such a Bill various political societies are holding meetings and framing resolutions pressing upon the Government the desirability of such a proposal. I suggest that an earnest effort should be made to

induce politicians who are working for the extension of the principle of household suffrage to the counties to include in their proposals the demand that household suffrage shall be completed in the town, by being granted to all householders, irrespective of sex. It is difficult to see how an earnest demand for the suffrage made on behalf of householders now excluded could be resisted by those who are asking for the extension of the principle to the counties, consistently with the arguments they will be compelled to use when they urge their own object. Men who did so resist would have to adopt and use against women the very arguments which their opponents use against them. Out of their own mouths they would be condemned—and out of their own utterances would their opponents be able to put them to shame. I believe, therefore, that with proper pressure and perseverance, our claims might be pressed upon the Government through their own supporters, on their own principles, and through ordinary political agency. It is certain that the claim so pressed would present itself with greatly increased strength. The Government might possibly be induced to include it in their own proposals, should they have any intention of introducing a Bill for the extension of household suffrage to the counties, or they might consent to adopt an amendment having that effect. It is obvious that should such a measure be in contemplation it will afford a most favourable opportunity for pressing our claim for a small share in any proposed redistribution of political power, and we earnestly exhort all our friends to urge this claim on all occasions, and by every means in their power, on the attention of those whose representations and efforts will have an influence in determining the shape in which the proposals for such redistribution shall be presented to Parliament."

The lines of work indicated in Miss Becker's paper were sedulously pursued, and sheets of two memorials to be signed by women were set in general circulation—one addressed to Mr. Gladstone, and another to Mr. Disraeli—and then were conveyed to the two leaders just before the date on which the debate on the Bill

was to come on. Each contained over 11,000 signatures; but, as many signed both, the total number of women taking part in the memorials was rather over 18,000.

That to Mr. Disraeli was presented by Mr. Wm. Gore Langton, M.P., who received the following reply:—

“DEAR GORE LANGTON,—I was much honoured by receiving from your hands the memorial signed by 11,000 women of England—among them some illustrious names—thanking me for my services in attempting to abolish the anomaly that the Parliamentary franchise attached to a household or property qualification, when possessed by a woman, should not be exercised, though in all matters of local government, when similarly qualified, she exercises this right. As I believe this anomaly to be injurious to the best interests of the country, I trust to see it removed by the wisdom of Parliament.—Yours sincerely,

“B. DISRAELI.”

The division of 1873 was the largest yet recorded: Mr. Bouverie again mustered 222 followers as before. Mr. Jacob Bright's followers rose to 155, and the hostile majority fell to 67. The most interesting incident of the debate was the speech of the Right Hon. J. W. Henley, the venerable and much-respected member for Oxfordshire. It made a marked impression, and should be recorded here.

“I have always voted against this Bill, but I have lately watched carefully the operation of the exercise of the franchise both in municipal and in school board elections by women, and as I think it has been beneficial in these cases, I do not see any reason why it should not be beneficial in Parliamentary elections. What my hon. friend has said has confirmed me in the view I have adopted. He says the French revolutionists con-





**CAROLINE ASHURST BIGGS.** (From a photograph about 1875.)



**MARY BEEDY, M.A. (Vassar).**



sidered that they would not have the women. Well, I do not want us to be revolutionists, and that is an additional reason why we at all events should give the franchise to women. As to any insecurity in the wording of the Bill, that may be set right in Committee. The principle is that women should have the right of voting. I confess that I have always hitherto voted against the Bill, but for the reasons I have stated I shall now give it my hearty support."

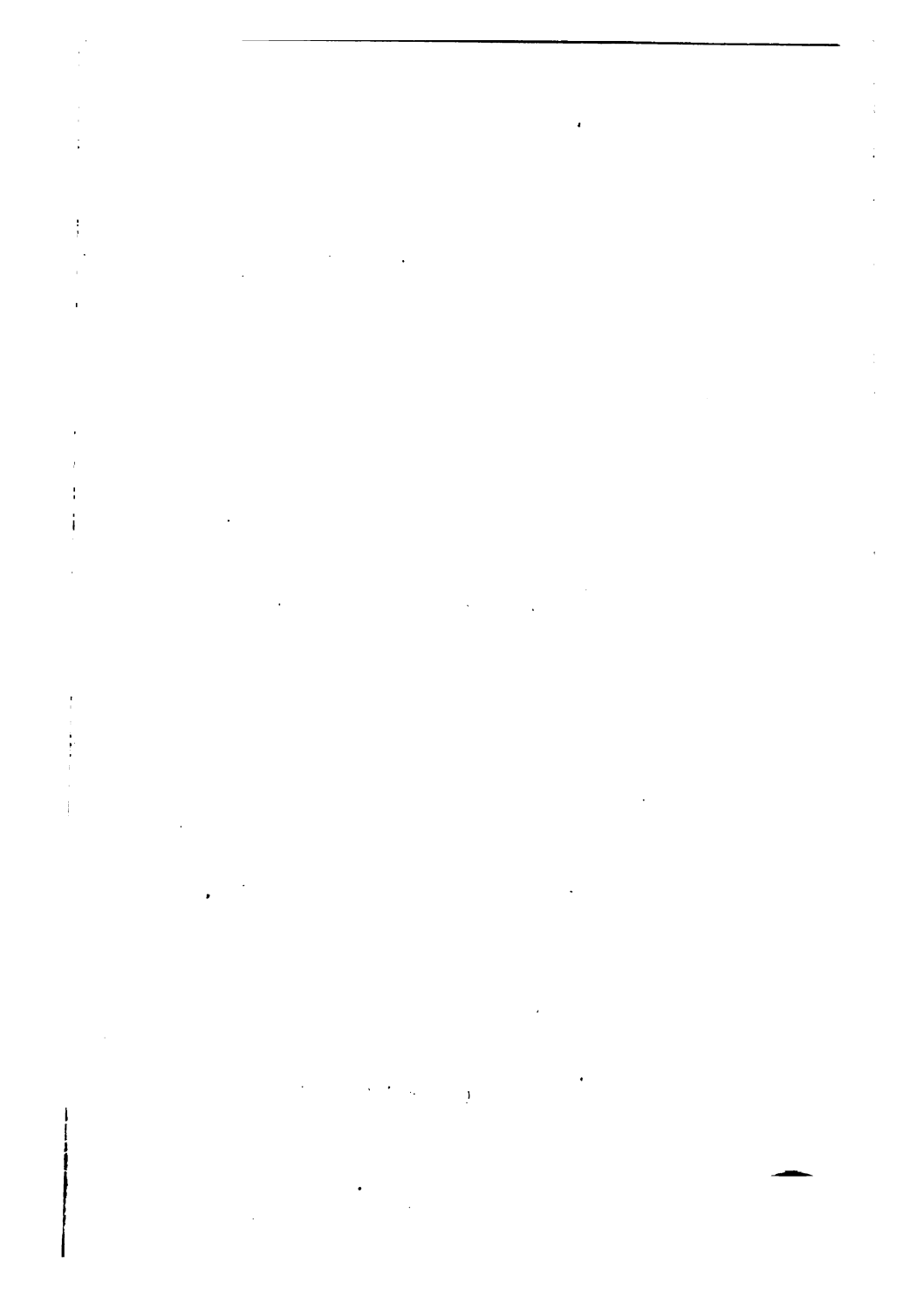
The energy thrown into meetings during this Parliament may, in some degree, be judged by a glance at the meetings held in the six months immediately preceding the debate of 1873. During that time 100 meetings were held, in which all the speakers who were at this period actively taking part in the movement spoke more or less frequently. Thus, Miss Caroline Ashurst Biggs spoke on twenty-three, Miss Becker on twenty-one occasions; the Misses Beedy and Liliashworth each fourteen; the Misses Rhoda Garrett and Emily Spender ten each; Mrs. Henry Kingsley eight; Miss Isabella Stuart and Miss Eliza Sturge each seven times; Mrs. Fawcett five times; Mrs. John Hullah and Miss Helena Downing each thrice; Mrs. Arthur Arnold twice; and Miss Jessie Craigen held twelve of her open-air lectures.

A mere collection of figures forsooth. Yes, but every unit of those figures is the tale of novel experiences in days when audiences came for the curiosity of hearing a woman speak—days sometimes clouded by difficulties in finding supporters to encourage, but oftener brightened by memories of friendly sympathy from persons of many diverse conditions—it was the members of the Society of Friends and the ministers of

Congregational churches who were in those days the most ready to give a helping hand to the novel idea. Nor was the humorous element absent from those gatherings, as when the chairman on one occasion, introducing Miss Liliash Ashworth and Miss Caroline Biggs to the meeting, assured the audience, that, though these ladies had come to address them from a platform, they were "quite homely women."

The list includes tours in Lancashire by Miss Becker and Miss Isabella Stuart; one in South Wales by Misses Liliash Ashworth, C. A. Biggs and Emily Spender; others in Kent and Lincolnshire, when the latter was replaced by Miss Mary Beedy, an American graduate of Vassar College, who puzzled the public mind by the M.A. after her name on the placards of the meetings, when, as yet, such letters were unattainable by Englishwomen, and who charmed even opponents by her amiability and practical good sense.

Open-air lectures given by that strange, erratic genius, Jessie Craigen, are also on the list. She planned and carried out her tours all of herself, travelling all over the kingdom from John o' Groats to the Land's End, accompanied only by her little dog. With the power of her magnificent voice, she gathered audiences round and held them riveted—now miners at the pit-bank in Northumberland or Durham, now fishers in Aberdeen or in Cornwall, or agricultural labourers in the market-places of country towns. Every now and then she would send a bundle of petitions from these meetings to Miss Becker or Miss Ashworth, which in their grimy condition bore token of their genuineness.





**AGNES M'LAREN.** (From a photograph in 1872.)



**JANE TAYLOUR.** (From a photograph in 1871.)

The wanderings of that restless daughter of a Highland seafaring father and an Italian actress mother would be a romantic tale.

In Scotland also work had gone forward steadily. Miss Agnes M'Laren reported to the Edinburgh Committee that in December 1872 Miss Jane Taylour and herself had held eighteen public meetings in the West of Scotland during the two previous months. These meetings were presided over, in nearly every instance, by the most influential citizen of the place, and had been attended by very large numbers; and in all but one the vote of the meetings had been given in favour of Women's Suffrage, and petitions had been agreed to and signed by the chairman on behalf of the meetings, and committees to promote the cause had generally been formed. Miss Taylour having intimated her intention to leave Scotland shortly for a residence in England, it was agreed by the Committee "to record their appreciation of her generous disinterestedness and most indefatigable services in having given three years of zealous labour to the cause of Women's Suffrage, during which she had delivered one hundred and thirty-one lectures, characterised by much care, thought and talent, which have awakened interest not only in the question of granting Parliamentary suffrage to women, but also in the higher development of women generally."<sup>1</sup>

In Ireland Miss Tod, accompanied by Miss Beedy, addressed a tour of meetings in February 1872, of which she wrote to the Central Committee in London that

<sup>1</sup> *W. S. Journal*, January 1873.

"everywhere they received good local support and met with much cordial sympathy, and nowhere opposition." The first of these meetings took place in Belfast on February 6th, Mr. Wm. Johnston, M.P., presiding. "I was afraid to take too large a hall," wrote Miss Tod, "lest Miss Beedy's voice or mine might be unable to fill it; but the one where we met is seated for between 500 and 600 people, and was quite crowded. On the platform were a number of influential and highly representative ladies and gentlemen, of all shades of opinion, religious and political."

Other meetings followed—one at Carrickfergus, Mr. Marriott Dalway, M.P., in the chair; another at Coleraine, where "the Town Hall, holding about 500 people, was filled to overflowing, and among the audience were many people of the best position in the neighbourhood. I was more struck at this meeting, than anywhere else, with the distinct change of opinion which passed over our audience as we proceeded. First, amused curiosity, then interest, then conviction, and then it became positive enthusiasm." This was followed by a drawing-room meeting in Derry, at the house of Mr. W. Biggar, J.P.; and the tour closed with Dublin.

"Some friends in Dublin, especially Mrs. Haslam, Mr. Eason, and Miss Corlett of the Queen's Institute, invited us to close our series of meetings by holding one there. There is no Committee in Dublin, and Miss Robertson, who has done much for the cause in other ways, was unfortunately, I believe, in Scotland. The meeting, however, was very good indeed. It was held on

the 21st, the Lord Mayor occupying the chair. The other speakers were Dr. Stewart, Rev. W. F. Stevenson, Mr. Eason, Rev. Mr. Carroll, Alderman Durdin, and Father O'Malley. The three clergymen named are respectively Presbyterian, Episcopalian and Catholic."

This was the last time on which it could be said there was no Committee in Dublin. In Mrs. Haslam the Women's Suffrage cause had by this time found a worker full of perseverance and buoyant energy. Mrs. Haslam (Anna Maria Fisher) added another to the many workers whom the Society of Friends, with its solid and equal education for boys and girls, had furnished to the movement. As a girl of seventeen she had helped, in the days of the Irish famine, in the soup-kitchens at Youghall. At twenty she had sat with Elihu Burritt at a public meeting, where she read a report of the "Olive Leaf Circle," one of the first branches started in Ireland of a small association which originated in the Society of Friends, rather more than fifty years ago, for interesting young people in the principles of peace. Coming as a young married woman to live in Dublin, she was fully alive to the questions of higher education and employment for women, then finding expression in the foundation of the Queen's Institute (in Molesworth St.) and the Alexandra College. Mrs. Haslam's name first appeared in Women's Suffrage interests on the petition of 1866. This meeting now opened out opportunity for an organized cohesion of friends of the movement, and she took up the work as Honorary Secretary of the Committee in Dublin, of which she is Honorary Secretary to this day.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For portrait of Mrs. Haslam, see p. 216.

Miss Isabella M. S. Tod first became interested in the movement through the meeting of the Social Science Association at Belfast in 1867. Hitherto her circle had presented no open door for the studious young woman, careful and sympathetic companion to a much-loved and liberal-minded mother, from whom she inherited the longing that she felt from her youth up to improve the lot of women. Urged on by this new motive, she studied diligently many things not usual with the girls of her day—thus, when the Social Science Congress came to her city, she was ready to be drawn into active connection with the questions of education for women, and married women's property laws, which were prominent subjects of discussion that year. By an easy, indeed a necessary, transition she very soon entered the Suffrage movement, the ideas of which came as a revelation to her. Both in writing and speaking she had the charm of an easy flow of well-chosen words, springing from the stores of a cultured and deeply religious mind, combined with some of the fighting temperament of her Scotch Presbyterian paternal ancestry, a combination of qualities that quickly made her foremost in the movement in Ireland.

§ 25. *Fresh Grounds of Hope.*

At this period a new feature appeared on the horizon of electoral politics—the claim of the agricultural labourer to share the privileges bestowed by the Act of 1867 on small householders in boroughs, was debated for the first time in the House of Commons in April 1873, when Mr. G. O. Trevelyan introduced the Household Franchise





ISABELLA S. M. TOD. (From a photograph about 1890.)

(continued from p. 10)

Counties Bill. Mr. Jacob Bright, on that occasion, pointed out that if justice demanded that a million of men be added to the register, which already contained two millions, justice demanded yet more urgently the admission of three hundred thousand women, seeing that women had not a particle of representation; and every argument now used with regard to the County Franchise Bill, told with even greater force with regard to the Women's Disabilities Bill. Mr. Bright subsequently gave notice of an amendment in Committee to include women householders. The Bill, which did not go to a division, did not, however, reach Committee stage; but from that time forward the claim of the agricultural labourer had a foremost place amongst the topics of political speeches, and awakened a reasonable hope amongst the workers for Women's Suffrage that their claim might be considered alongside of the claim of the agricultural labourer, and Miss Becker, in the *Women's Suffrage Journal*, urged that meetings called for the purpose of recommending measures for the attention of Government would place the removal of the electoral disabilities of women on their lists—following the example set by a meeting of the Liberal Party in Birmingham on 10th December 1872, when Mr. S. Dixon, M.P., and Mr. Muntz, M.P., addressed their constituents, and a resolution was passed, in which "assimilation of the borough and county franchise" and "*recognition of the rights of women (being householders) to the franchise*" were included in the measures the meeting "trusted Ministers would introduce into Parliament as soon as practicable." That resolution was moved by Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, who

said, in the course of his speech, that they had to complete the work of 1867, and that they had also to claim the suffrage for women who are householders.<sup>1</sup>

Almost contemporaneously with this new impetus to the movement came the death of its first leader. Mr. John Stuart Mill passed away at Airgrove on April 8th. "His was the hand which dealt the first effectual blow at the political slavery of women. Many before him had thought, and spoken, and written against the subjection of women, but no one before him had taken practical steps to abolish their political disabilities." So Miss Becker wrote in the *Women's Suffrage Journal* of June 1873. "Let them, then, avail themselves," she went on to say, "of the occasion; let them honour Mill by the one tribute and the one duty which women alone can give. Men can raise monuments to his memory; men can labour, as he has laboured, for the removal of electoral disabilities; but Mill could not give—and men cannot give—political freedom to women, unless they themselves come forward to claim and exercise it. Men cannot prove that Mill was wise or right in claiming political emancipation for women; women alone can justify to the world the course he took on this great question by the earnestness with which they seek, and the discretion with which they use, the political rights which he sought to obtain for them."

Such was the position and attitude of the suffrage workers when the election of 1874 took place. The

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from *Birmingham Daily Post* in *Women's Suffrage Journal* of February 1872, p. 15.

attitude of Parliament may be gathered from the following table of the division lists in the House of Commons:—

	FOR				AGAINST			
	English.	Welsh.	Irish.	Scotch.	English.	Welsh.	Irish.	Scotch.
1871	109	6	19	25	172	8	34	14
1872	112	4	22	25	191	9	28	14
1873	121	3	22	26	180	11	33	15

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE PARLIAMENT OF 1874.

#### § 26. *A Dilemma.*

THE General Election of February 1874 placed a Conservative Ministry in power, with Mr. Disraeli at its head. Like the previous election of 1868, this election returned an increased number of supporters of the claim of women to the franchise. It also resembled the election of 1868, in the distressing particular that the leader of the question was defeated. Not only Mr. Jacob Bright, but also Mr. Eastwick, who had seconded the Bill, was left out; so also were Mr. Fawcett, Mr. Hinde Palmer, and several other friends of the measure. The loss of these strong supporters in the House occasioned much anxiety as to who would now be Parliamentary leader. And it was with considerable gratification that the Committees found that so prominent a member of the legal profession as Mr. W. Forsyth, Q.C. (Conservative; M.P. for Marylebone), was willing to take charge of the measure.

Presently, however, a difficulty arose, and the Committees found themselves in a considerable dilemma on

hearing that Mr. Forsyth proposed to introduce words into the Bill, which, however desirable from the Parliamentary point of view, as giving precise definition to its actual operation, would, they well knew, be a stumbling-block from the propagandist point of view.

Miss Becker, writing to Mr. Eastwick on March 4th, thus explained the difficulty :—

“I earnestly hope Mr. Forsyth does not wish to alter the wording of our Bill. It would be a fatal error, as it seems to me. We should limit ourselves strictly to the disabilities of *sex* and leave the marriage question alone. We ought not to introduce the matter of marriage into the electoral law. If married women cannot vote under the Municipal Franchise Act of 1869, it is nothing in the wording of the Statute which disqualifies them, but the common law disabilities of marriage. It would be very unwise to raise the question of the expediency of maintaining these disabilities in a debate on the question of removing the disabilities of sex. The Bill with respect to the Parliamentary franchise should strictly follow the precedent of the Municipal Franchise Act, otherwise we shall be overwhelmed with difficulties at the outset. The Bill as it stands has obtained 155 votes in the old House of Commons and 218 pledges in the new Parliament. If it is altered, all these pledges will be vitiated. The Bill as it stands satisfies women who are claiming the franchise. If we cannot have all we want—a Bill conferring the suffrage on the same conditions as it is given to men—the alteration could be made in Committee, and we must perforce submit ; but, pray, use your influence to get the Bill introduced in its original form. The Bill as it stands is sound and comprehensive in principle. It does not touch the disabilities of marriage. If it attempted to deal with it, it must either first abolish the disabilities in cases where a married woman possesses the qualification as owner or occupier of property, if she can possess it ; or, secondly, conferring the existing common law disability by a fresh statutory penalty on marriage. I believe that either of these courses would raise grave objections,

and would certainly hinder the chances of passing the second reading of the Bill, chances which appear to me very favourable, if the old Bill, which has stood so many debates with constantly increasing support, is adhered to."

The position was laid before the public in its plain and practical aspect by the following article in the *Women's Suffrage Journal* for April 1874:—

"One very important change has been introduced this year into the Bill, the text of which will be found in another column. Mr. Forsyth had added a clause providing that no married woman shall be entitled to vote in a Parliamentary election. The clause makes no difference in the practical operation of the measure. The common law disabilities of married women effectually preclude them from the exercise of the suffrage, and if the Bill as introduced by Mr. Jacob Bright had become law, no married woman would have been entitled to vote. The only difference is, that Mr. Jacob Bright was content to leave the matter to the operation of the common law, and did not desire to complicate the general question of the disability of sex with the special question of the disabilities of married women, and Mr. Forsyth deems it expedient to make an express declaration on the subject. We do not disguise our extreme regret, on grounds of principle, that a statutory penalty on marriage should be introduced into the electoral law, but women have at present no representation at all in the legislature. The Bill, as introduced by Mr. Forsyth, would give them a share in the election of members of the House of Commons, equal and similar to that which they would have



obtained under the Bill as introduced by Mr. Jacob Bright. The question of the justice or expediency of maintaining the common law disabilities of married women is not a practical question at the present time.

“Should measures dealing with the whole or any portion of these disabilities come before Parliament, it would be of great assistance to members, in arriving at a just decision, if they were responsible to a large body of women constituents, even if all such women were *Femmes soles*.”<sup>1</sup>

In view of the representations made to him, Mr. Forsyth agreed to modify his proposed proviso to the restricted technical aspect conveyed by the legal phrase “no woman under coverture.”

No modifications or explanations, however, could remove the scruples of some who regarded any semblance even of limitation as a defection from principle—and several members withdrew from the Central Committee. The view, however, which was taken by the Society at large is clearly conveyed in the following letter from Miss Becker to Mr. Forsyth, dated May 28th:—

“I have never doubted that you introduced the proviso in the belief that it would disarm objection to the Bill, and so it does completely, the objection from *one* side. But there is a Scylla as well as a Charybdis in this delicate navigation, and the original Bill was carefully and purposely drafted so as to avoid both. If you will refer to Mr. Gladstone’s speech on the

<sup>1</sup> *Women’s Suffrage Journal*, April 1874, p. 53.

debate in 1871, you will see that he says: 'It is quite clear that married women, if they possessed the qualifications, ought not to be omitted from any privilege conferred upon single women.' Mr. Jacob Bright's answer to that was clear and simple. 'My Bill does not exclude married women; if they are excluded it is by the common law disabilities of wives, which are not now under discussion. Let us keep the purely electoral law clear from the complications of the marriage law. The electoral law does not, or should not, take cognizance of the fact of marriage in the case of either women or men.' So might Mr. Bright have replied to Mr. Gladstone. On the other hand, the objectors on the contrary side should have been silenced by the fact that the Bill did not touch the common law disabilities which precluded wives from the suffrage. You will gather from this, as well as from an article in the journal, and even my letter in the *Examiner*, that I think the proviso weakens the Bill logically, as well as raising some practical difficulty, although words cannot express my indignation at the conduct of those who have cast about such unworthy aspersions, and at the deplorable folly of those who have tried to create these dissensions and difficulties which it is our first duty to avoid. Although I prefer the Bill as originally introduced, I am sure that with the amended proviso it ought to satisfy all reasonable people, and be heartily accepted and strenuously worked for by all friends of the cause—and it is very likely that the proviso will win or secure votes; if it does that, its introduction is amply justified."

The developments of the session, which, owing to the unexpected dissolution in February, had only begun on 19th March, gradually showed it to be hopeless to preserve a day for the Bill, in the pressure of Government business, and it was withdrawn for that year.

§ 27. *Work for and against the Bill.*

Petition work may be described as the dominant factor of the work during this Parliament. They flowed in an incessant stream. The April issue of the *Women's Suffrage Journal* says that within the few weeks that Parliament had been in session, petitions, containing over a quarter of a million signatures, had been presented in favour of Mr. Forsyth's Bill—more than for any other Bill that session. Of these the majority appeared to be the signatures of women. By the close of the session, 1273 petitions, with 415,622 signatures, had been sent up in favour of Women's Suffrage, while the numbers for Mr. Trevelyan's County Franchise Bill were 68, with 48,797 signatures.<sup>1</sup>

As the day for the trial of strength approached, two vigorous whips—one with the signatures of four members on the Conservative, and the other with four members on the Liberal side—were issued.<sup>2</sup> But all this effort

<sup>1</sup> *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1875, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> *Opposition Conservative Whip.*

CERTAIN AND IMPORTANT DIVISION.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE BILL.

You are earnestly and particularly requested to be in the House of Commons on Wednesday, April 7th, by *four o'clock*, to vote against the

notwithstanding, the majority against sank to 13, thereby occasioning so much uneasiness in the minds of the opponents that they resolved to form a Committee for "Maintaining the Integrity of the Franchise."<sup>1</sup>

MINUTES OF A MEETING at the House of Commons,  
23rd June 1875.

"*Present.*—The Rt. Hon. E. P. Bouverie in the chair, and the following Members of Parliament: Rt. Hon. H. C. Childers, Marquis of Hamilton, Lord Randolph Churchill, Hon. E. Stanhope, Mr. Bentinck, Mr. Beresford Hope, Mr. Chaplin, Mr. Hayter, Sir Henry Holland, Sir Henry James, Mr. Kay Shuttleworth, Mr. Leatham, Mr. Merewether, Mr. Newdigate, Mr. Raikes, Mr. de Rothschild, Mr. Scourfield, Mr. Whitbread.

"*Resolved.*—I. 'That a committee of Peers, Members of Parliament, and other influential men be organized for the purpose of maintaining the integrity of the franchise, in opposition to the claims for the extension of the Parliamentary suffrage to women.

"II. 'That Mr. E. P. Bouverie be requested to act as chairman; and Lord Claud John Hamilton and Mr. Kay Shuttleworth as honorary secretaries. The following members have since joined those named above: Lord Elcho, Rt. Hon. E. Knatchbull-Huguesen, Rt. Hon. T. B. Mowbray, Sir Thomas Bayley, Mr. Butt, Mr. Gibson, and Col. Kingscote.'

second reading of the Women's Suffrage Bill, the rejection of which will be moved by Mr. Chaplin.

HENRY CHAPLIN. A. J. B. BERESFORD HOPE.  
J. H. SCOURFIELD. CHARLES RUSSELL.

*Opposition Liberal Whip.*

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE BILL.

Your attendance in the House of Commons on Wednesday, April 7th, to vote against the second reading of the Women's Suffrage Bill, is earnestly requested.

E. A. KNATCHBULL-HUGUESSEN. HENRY JAMES.  
E. A. LEATHAM. SAM. WHITBREAD.

<sup>1</sup> *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1875, p. 109.

But even a Committee for Maintaining the Integrity of the Franchise did not lessen the support given to the Bill by a single vote, when, on 26th April 1876, Mr. Forsyth again brought forward his "little Bill of mighty consequence."<sup>1</sup>

Even though the eloquence of the Rt. Hon. John Bright had been enlisted against it, there were very few among the noes who were not already known to be opponents of the Bill—"the stronghold of the opposition was amongst the M.P.'s of the old Parliament."<sup>2</sup>

In a letter to the Rt. Hon. John Bright, which was published as a pamphlet, "A Lady in the Gallery" (Miss Isabella Tod) wrote: "I felt the pity of it when you rose with pale face and laid a trembling hand on the table before you for support, whilst, with hesitating accents, you repeated against us the worn-out arguments you have so often and so mercilessly exposed when uttered by your opponents." In the Annual Report of the Manchester Committee, the speech was described as "characterized throughout by a tone of doubt and hesitation very unusual with the speaker." Surely the Lady in the Gallery hit the true blot in Mr. Bright's conception of the matter when she wrote: "You say that our Bill is 'based on an assumed constant and irreconcilable hostility between the sexes.' It is, on the contrary, based on the belief in the constant, trustful sympathy between the sexes."

The elevation of Mr. Disraeli to the peerage at the close of the session, was a distinct loss to the strength of the movement in the House of Commons.

<sup>1</sup> *Punch*.

<sup>2</sup> *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1876.

§ 28. *Opposition Tactics.*

Before another session opened Mr. Jacob Bright had re-entered Parliament, and in 1877 the Bill passed back to its first leader, and was set down for June 6th, the interval being occupied by the vigorous promotion of petitions and meetings—the work winding up with a large meeting in St. James' Hall, when Lord Houghton presided, and on the day before the debate a deputation of ladies to the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir Stafford Northcote). The deputation was introduced by Mr. Forsyth; Lady Anna Gore Langton expressed the hopes of the Societies for his support on this occasion, and their gratitude for his support in past years. She was followed by Miss L. Ashworth and Miss Becker with a brief statement. Sir Stafford Northcote then explained the position from which he regarded the movement.

“The view I have taken of the Parliamentary franchise is that it is an artificial arrangement in the constitution of the country, for the purpose of producing the best possible, or at least the best attainable, constituency for the election of a governing body like our Parliament, and therefore I should be slow to admit the mere plea that either this man or woman has as good a right to vote as that man or woman. I must consider, first, whether the alteration would be beneficial; and, secondly, whether it is, at any given moment, sensible and proper to make a considerable electoral change. It resolves itself with me into a question of time and expediency; and I am bound to say, speaking quite frankly, that I

do not think the present a particularly desirable time for reopening the great electoral question. If I find myself unable to vote for the Bill to-morrow, it will be upon that ground, and not from any of the hesitation of mind which is indicated by many of those opposed to the Bill."

The friendly reception given to the deputation, together with fresh promises of support from many and unexpected quarters, all pointed to a good division. Then a most unlooked-for turn took place in the debate. Mr. Courtney had risen at 5.15 to reply to Mr. Butt, when the Opposition burst into a tumultuous uproar, which effectually prevented his words from being heard. When it became apparent that the opponents would not listen to arguments, the purpose was formed amongst the members on the side of the Bill to prevent a vote being taken, and Mr. Courtney breasted the storm of yells and cries that drowned his voice until the clock struck the hour of closing.

Those wild notes, *Divide! divide!! divide!!!* came surging up in boisterous billows of sound to the ladies' gallery, and struck on the ears of the listeners there in painful discord with the earnest yearning with which they regarded what to them was a holy cause. Truly the echoes of that afternoon ring even now in one's memory as the most painful experience of all those years.

The debate and the treatment it met with aroused very strong feelings, and a meeting took place on June 12th, by invitation of Lady Anna Gore Langton, at Langton House, George Street, Hanover Square, to discuss the speeches. This meeting is memorably marked

by the speech of Mrs. Wm. Grey, which tells so much in its short compass of the attitude of thoughtful women at the time, that it should be recorded in full.

"This is the first time," Mrs. Wm. Grey said, "since I came forward in the movement for the better education of women that I have ever opened my lips on Woman Suffrage. I have, indeed, carefully avoided doing so, and refused every invitation to speak, partly because it is unwise to attempt to drive two coaches at once, and as I was anxious to drive, or at least be a passenger in the education coach, I thought it better to leave the suffrage coach without me; but yet more because the education movement was fighting its way against much prejudice, and to weight it with the still stronger prejudices clustered round Women's Suffrage would have done it great injury, while what I could have done for the suffrage would have done but little good. My sister (Miss Shireff) felt with me, and we determined to go on quietly working, with the conviction that every woman who did her chosen work well was helping Women's Suffrage. But when it was stated in the House of Commons that none of the women who had been promoters of women's education were friends to Women's Suffrage,—and those who had helped in Girton College were especially mentioned,—then my sister and I resolved it would be cowardly not to speak. And when asked to speak here I determined to break through my rule. I believe the truth is the reverse of what was stated. As a rule, all the women who have been active in any cause for the benefit of their sex, are strong friends of the suffrage, and the few exceptions go to prove the rule. I am here, therefore, to declare that, whatever value may be given to the judgment of my sister and myself—judgment founded on the experience of a long life, and exercised on every question in which women are concerned—whatever influence we may possess, from personal character on the value of any work we have been able to do, the whole of that weight, the whole of that influence, we wish to be thrown into the Women's Suffrage scale. I would like to say why I wish all thrown into the Women's Suffrage scale. I believe it



impossible to deny the claim, but I was indifferent to it. But ever since I began to work for women's education, I have felt more and more that we should never get justice in education without the suffrage, and, on the other hand, the suffrage movement has helped that for education."

§ 29. *The Trend of the Time.*

The work went quietly on through the session of 1878 and 1879 without presenting any novel aspects. After the session of 1877 Mr. Jacob Bright's health induced him to resign the conduct of the Bill; and at the instance of a representative deputation, which waited on him in his rooms in Queen Anne's Gate, Mr. Leonard Courtney consented to take the position.

Although Mr. Bouverie's Committee for Maintaining the Integrity of the Franchise instituted a systematic canvass amongst members of the House of Commons against the Bill, it maintained, and more than maintained its ground in 1878: the hostile majority fell to eighty, "a result which was the more satisfactory considering that, since the division in 1876, seventeen friends had been removed by death or other causes from the House of Commons, and only five opponents. One of those whose death (in June 1878) was most felt was the Rt. Hon. Russell Gurney, Recorder of London, who had been teller with Mr. Mill in 1866, and who, always ready to help on the efforts of women, had shown himself to be in truth a 'friend of women.'"

In 1879 Mr. Courtney varied the procedure by introducing a resolution. This resolution led to a very animated debate, followed by a vote which was

the smallest on record since 1870 ; but its significance was not to be measured by the numbers in the division lists—as may be understood from the explanation given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir Stafford Northcote) of his reason for giving his vote for what he called the previous question. To vote for a resolution to “forthwith” repeal the electoral disabilities of women would be to pledge the Government to bring in a measure ; his vote was not to pronounce an opinion on the measure, but to pronounce that this was not the time or manner to introduce it.

“The silent, secret shower of papers in the ballot-boxes of the United Kingdom,” which reversed the power of parties in the State at the sudden General Election of March 1880, swept nearly all the prominent friends of the Women’s Suffrage measure back into the House—as well as some who had been defeated in 1874 ; on the other hand, it swept several of the persistent opponents out. So hope grew stronger for the success of the appeal, soon to be made to Parliament, that the last remaining disability under the English electoral law should be removed by the approaching Reform Bill.

These encouraging circumstances were the signal for an outburst of energetic work—such as had never yet been. Money came in more freely. Miss Priestman in Bristol undertook and successfully carried out the collection of a fund of £1000 for the Bristol and West of England Society. By means of that £1000 the Committee in Bristol were able to lay down systematic plans of work throughout the Western Counties and South Wales, during the next three years. To recall

the meetings, journeyings, interviews, hospitalities and friendly intercourse with men and women of all sorts and conditions, of all sects and parties, during this period would be for the reader wearisome as the programme of a festival at which he had not been present—but for the writer they are years filled indeed with bright and grateful memories.

Each of the great demonstrations recorded in the next section inspired further exertion; but before touching on them a glance at the following letters will give the reader some knowledge of the then prevailing trend of affairs:—

Miss Becker to Mrs. M'Laren:—

*“ Oct. 25, 1879.*

“MY DEAR MRS. M'LAREN,—We have had such a meeting that I must write and tell you of it. The largest ward in Manchester is contested this year, and we summoned a meeting by the enclosed card to the women electors—1368 in number. Well, when we got to the hall we found that a dense crowd of men had got possession, and the women who had got in were all crushed together on and near the platform. The door was besieged with women who had brought their cards, but of course they could not get in. One woman called out: ‘I have had a card from Miss Becker and I demand admittance.’ We then saw how great a mistake we had made in not keeping the meeting for women only, but all that could be done was to promise to hold another meeting for them next night.

“The Tory party had got it into their heads that it was a Liberal meeting, and a few rough youths made such a great disturbance that no one could be heard. At last Miss Craigen was called on, and she held the meeting enchained by her grand voice and her strong and witty words, delivered with practised power. The disturbers were taken out by the police, but still the meeting, though good,

was not of those who were meant to come. I really thought that we could not fill a large hall with women only—especially in that ward, which contains the lowest and worst class in Manchester, and hardly any of the better class of people. But last night the room, which will seat 600 or 700, was quite full of women only, all seemingly electors—all poor working women, and, as it seemed, of both sides in politics.

“They moved me into the chair, and I gave them an address, then Miss Craigen spoke to them. How they listened—how they cheered—how strong and intelligent an interest they took in what was said to them. It would have done your heart good to see! Several of them spoke very nicely. If my eyes had been shut I should have fancied it was men who were cheering and clapping; the applause was as hearty and strong as at a men’s meeting. I can’t tell you how my heart went out to those women; and to see them look at me—oh, it was really sacred—awful; it was as if I received a baptism.

“It has been a new life to me to know and feel the strength there is in those women—when many fall away from us and leaders desert us; but in those women there is a force which, gathered together, led, organized and made manifest, is enough to lead us to victory. It has given me such a sense of strength and happiness. I know the comfort in this hour will pass away, and the clouds gather again over my spirit; but I trust that the knowledge of what there is in these women around me, and the sense of their support in our work, will be a source of strength which will not pass away.

“I am sure, when the right time comes for such a demonstration, we could organize in the Free Trade Hall such a grand demonstration of women citizens to demand the Parliamentary vote as would not be unworthy to rank with the Liberal demonstration held in the city to-day, and that without the aid of great men’s names to draw them.—Ever yours,  
“LYDIA BECKER.”

From Miss Becker to Mrs. Ashworth Hallett:—

“April 2nd, 1880.

“I think that when we take Parliamentary action, just after a general Reform Bill has been passed, ours should be a separate Bill to complete what has been begun. But when we propose to act just before a measure of reform is proposed, our place is to make ours a part of that measure, and to take advantage of the opening of the door by others to get in ourselves.

“If we introduced our Bill separately, and before the county franchise, Conservatives like Sir S. Northcote cannot support it, because that would almost commit them to the county franchise; but if they see that the county franchise *must pass*, they will feel free to act on their judgment on ours, and may surely well give the women landowners votes as a counterpoise to the men labourers.

“For these reasons, I am strongly averse, as at present advised, to bringing in our separate Bill; but, of course, this is subject to what turns up in the course of the election, and to the opinion of our Parliamentary leaders.—Yours truly, “LYDIA BECKER.”

From Miss Becker to Mr. Stansfeld, M.P.:—

“May 26th, 1880.

“MY DEAR MR. STANSFELD,—I hear from Mr. Courtney that you are favourable to the idea of raising the question of the enfranchisement of women on the Irish Borough Franchise Bill. I am truly rejoiced to hear this, and I write to beg you to use all your influence to get it done.

“It seems to me that Mr. Courtney should *at once* put on the paper a notice of amendment in Committee on the Borough Franchise Ireland Bill, extending it to women householders. I believe that if such a notice were on the paper before the debate on the second reading, the proposed amendment would be referred to during the debate, and much interesting speaking might take place. The amendment would secure one of our objects, which is that no debate on the extension of the franchise shall take place without some reference to women.

“The Government think they can ignore our question ; they have no idea that it could possibly come to complicate any of their Bills. I want to undeceive them. I want to mix up our question with their projects of reform from the first. If such an amendment were on the paper, they would have our subject presented to them not only by our friends, who would ask for it as a matter of justice, but by men who dislike the idea of the low franchise, and who would say : ‘If you give it to these men because they are householders, you cannot logically refuse it to the women householders, who claim it.’ I believe that many men who will vote against the second reading of the Bill, would vote for our amendment ; and the support of these, combined with our more especial friends, might make a combination which the Government would be forced to regard with a certain degree of respect. Altogether the situation seems to afford a greater promise of the chance of making ourselves disagreeable to the Government that means to carry a Reform Bill that shall leave us out, than anything I could have hoped for, and I am sure we ought not to let it slip. Would it be absolutely impossible to get the support of the leader of the opposition to our amendment ?

“Could you consult with Mr. Jacob Bright about this ? I am sure you could get six or eight warm suffrage M.P.’s who would make a splendid fight for our amendment, and we could whip up a large body of the rank and file.”

[Towards the close of 1880 Mr. Courtney accepted office under the new Government, and Mr. Hugh Mason (Ashton-under-Lyne) acceded to the request of the Committees that he would succeed Mr. Courtney as their leader in Parliament. To Mr. Mason Miss Becker wrote, on 4th November 1881, asking him to speak at the Annual Meeting of the Manchester Society.]

“MY DEAR MR. MASON,—We ask you to give us a good, strong political address, and say as much as you can to encourage us. Of course there is much that is doubtful and depressing if we look

ahead and meet trouble half-way, but we need not indulge in gloomy forecasts. If we look backwards we shall see signs of astonishing and unhopd-for progress. Those of us who have been engaged in the agitation for many years are conscious of a great change in the atmosphere. When we go to arrange a meeting we find sympathy and help in cases where we formerly found indifference, and we cannot go to any town without finding large and enthusiastic meetings in our favour.

“The great demonstrations of women in so many large towns mark a new departure in the movement, and they prove unmistakably that the great masses of the women in the country are with us and support us in demanding the franchise.

“Many meetings of women voters have been held during the recent municipal election, and in every case where such a meeting has been held candidates have pledged themselves to support in the Council a petition in support of the Parliamentary franchise for women.

“Please *don't give us any cold water* ; we have quite enough of discouragement. ‘Nothing succeeds like success.’ Nothing helps success as well as trying to deserve it, and having our efforts recognized as deserving of success. Those working in the movement are not at all disposed to be over sanguine or to underrate the difficulties of the task before us, so do not suppose you are addressing persons who fancy they are going to win immediately, and who need to have their expectations moderated.—Yours truly,

“LYDIA E. BECKER.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE ADVENT OF A NEW REFORM BILL.

#### § 30. *The Demonstrations of Women.*

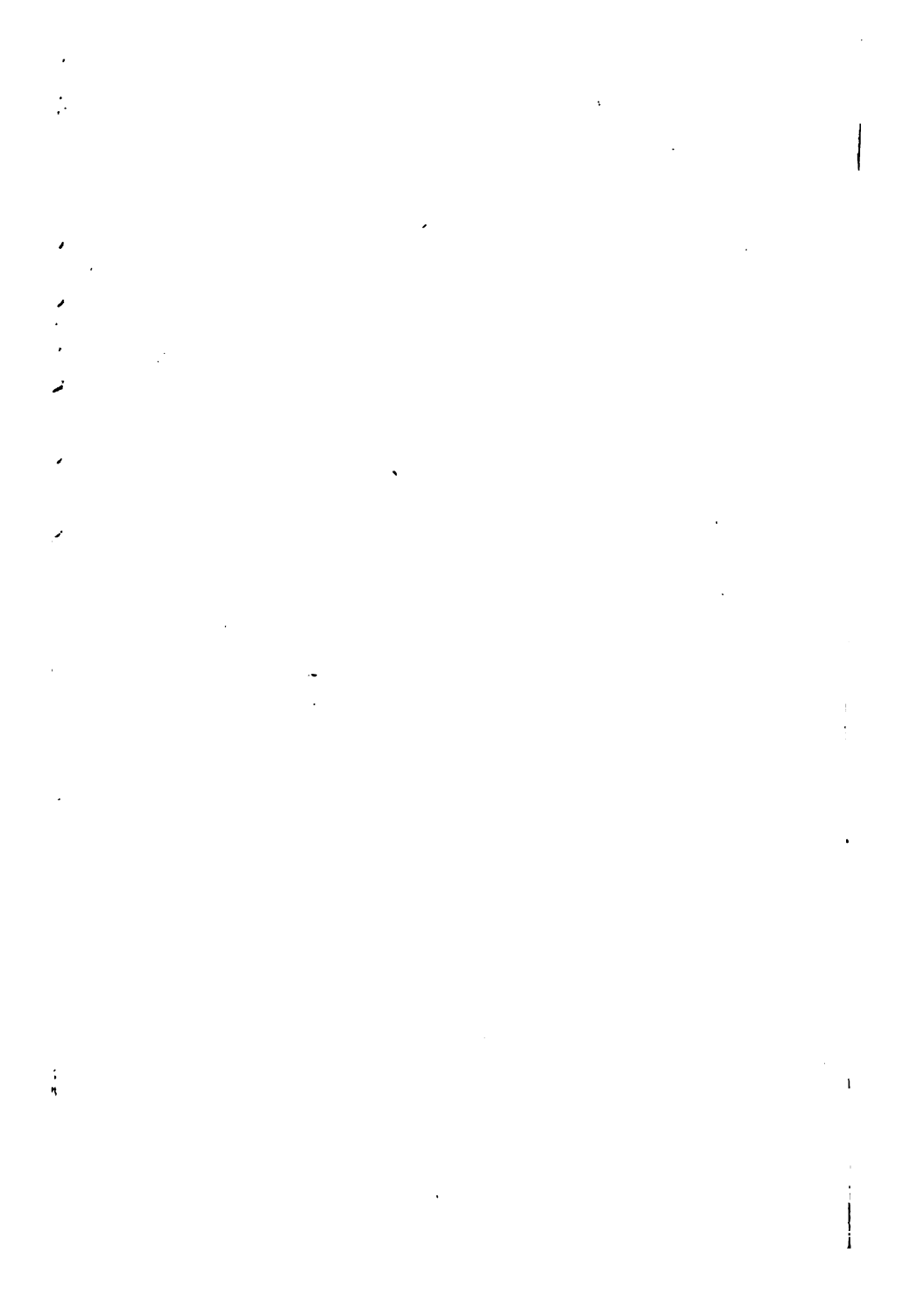
THE letter to Mrs. M'Laren, quoted in the previous chapter, shows the genesis of the bold idea conceived by Miss Becker to fill the Free Trade Hall (Manchester) with women, and women only. The attempt to fill that immense building by an appeal to one-half of the population, and that the most stay-at-home half, was an undertaking that might well make her tremble at her own conception. So strong were her doubts indeed that, two or three days before the event, she went to the hall to see whether, if need were, some portions might be screened off. But when the day came there was no need for screening off—far from it. Instead, it became necessary to provide room for an overflow meeting.

That was a sight not to be forgotten, when Mrs. M'Laren took her seat in the chair, every corner filled with eager, upturned faces of women, in a hall which, as Mrs. M'Laren proceeded to remind them, "was built in the cause of freedom." "Some of us," she said, "have learned our political lessons within its walls, many years





**MRS. M'LAREN (PRISCILLA BRIGHT).** (From a photograph  
taken in 1901.)



ago, with distinguished men for our teachers, and we have learned from them how persistent effort leads to success in getting grievances redressed."

Not the least memorable part was the scene at the close, when a voice, like a mighty melodious bell, rang out over that vast assemblage, electrifying the audience, who rose as one woman to their feet, cheering and waving their handkerchiefs. It was the first time Jessie Craigen had been heard by any of that audience, and the effect was unprecedented in its enthusiasm.

In each of the demonstrations that followed, the same main features prevailed—the largest hall of the city, packed from floor to ceiling with women of all ranks and occupations, working women in very large proportions. Men were only present as spectators, and that in the galleries by payment of half-a-crown. The speeches were numerous; each short, eloquent and to the point. Memorials to the Government were in every case adopted unanimously.

These nine demonstrations, taken all together, may be said to have focussed the working powers of the movement. There was not a worker for the cause who did not contribute in some shape or form, be it as president, speaker, organizer, or locally in working up her neighbours and friends. These quite unprecedented gatherings were signs of desire of women to have their share in the enfranchisement with all other householders—signs far more emphatic than any ever given by those dwellers in the rural districts whom the Reform Act of 1884 shortly admitted within the pale.

## THE ROLL OF THE DEMONSTRATIONS OF WOMEN.

## WHERE AND WHEN HELD.

1. Manchester,	Free Trade Hall,	Feb. 8, 1880.
2. London,	St. James' Hall,	May 6, 1880.
3. Bristol,	Colston Hall,	Nov. 4, 1880
4. Birmingham,	Town Hall,	Feb. 12, 1881.
5. Bradford,	St. George's Hall,	Nov. 22, 1881.
6. Nottingham,	Albert Hall,	Nov. 30, 1881.
7. Sheffield,	Albert Hall,	Feb. 27, 1882.
8. Glasgow,	St. Andrew's Hall,	Nov. 3, 1882.
( <i>Scottish National Demonstration of Women.</i> )		
9. Edinburgh,	Hall of U.P. Synod,	Mar. 22, 1884.

## THEIR PRESIDENTS.

Mrs. PRISCILLA BRIGHT M'LAREN.—*Manchester, Bradford, Glasgow.*  
 Viscountess HARBERTON.—*London, Sheffield, Edinburgh.*  
 Mrs. BEDDOC.—*Bristol.* Mrs. CROSSKEY.—*Birmingham.*  
 Mrs. SAMUEL LUCAS.—*Nottingham.*

## THEIR SPEAKERS.

Miss Becker, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8. Caroline A. Biggs, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8.  
 Helena Downing, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Jessie Craigen, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.  
 Mrs. Scatcherd, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9. Eliza Sturge, 1, 3, 4, 7.  
 Mrs. Beddoc, 4, 8. Mrs. Ellis, 1, 5, 6, 7. Miss Carbutt, 5, 7.  
 Mrs. Ashworth Hallett, 1, 2. Isabella M. S. Tod, 2, 3, 9.  
 Viscountess Harberton, 1, 6. Mrs. G. R. Cowen, 6, 7.  
 Flora Stevenson, 8, 9. Eliza Wigham, 8, 9. Mrs. Wellstood, 1, 8.

## And once each—

*In Manchester.*—Mrs. Josephine Butler, Mrs. Haalam, Mrs. Pearson.  
*In London.*—Mrs. Arthur Arnold, Mrs. Fawcett, Rhoda Garrett, Mrs. (Augusta) Webster, Mrs. (Emma) Paterson.  
*In Bristol.*—Henrietta Muller, Hellena Richardson, Emily Sturge.  
*In Birmingham.*—Mrs. R. W. Dale, Mrs. C. E. Matthews, Mrs. Alfred Southall, Mrs. Fenwick Miller.  
*In Bradford.*—Mrs. W. P. Byles, Jane Cobden, Dr. Edith Pechey.  
*In Nottingham.*—Mrs. Dowson, Helen Taylor.  
*In Sheffield.*—Mrs. Samuel Lucas, Miss Hibbert.  
*In Glasgow.*—Mrs. Charles M'Laren.  
*In Edinburgh.*—Mrs. M'Laren, Misses Burton, Balgarnie, S. S. Mair, Mrs. Ormiston Chant, Mrs. Lindsay.

## THEIR ORGANIZERS.

Mrs. M'Cormick, 1, 2, 4, 8. S. M. Backhouse, 1. Helen Blackburn, 2, 3.  
 Mrs. M'Ilquham, 4. Maria Coby, 4. Eliza Kirkland, 8, 9. Sara Torrance, 8; and local helpers in numbers everywhere.

### § 31. *Isle of Man.*

In the summer of 1880 a movement had begun to make itself felt in the Isle of Man for a more extended franchise for election of the ancient "House of Keys," and the Governor had given notice of a Bill for household suffrage to *male* persons. This was the occasion for a movement on the part of the Manchester Society to urge that the claim of women be considered. Miss Becker and Mrs. Oliver Scatcherd visited the Island and held a series of meetings in August, addressing crowded audiences in Douglas, Ramsey, Peel and Castletown.

They were everywhere received with the utmost cordiality, the *Isle of Man Times* and other papers giving efficient help; and to judge by the results, their lectures proved instrumental in initiating the movement to obtain a measure for enfranchising women in this ancient kingdom, which does not send members to the British Parliament, but "has its own Governor, House of Lords (the Council), House of Commons (the Keys), Bishop and Judge (the Deemsters); it enacts its own laws, imposes its own taxes—the only Imperial control being the sanction of the Queen, which is necessary before a law takes effect."

Its story is summarized in the *Women's Suffrage Journal* of December 1880 and January 1881.

"The House of Keys has survived as a legislative assembly from a period long antecedent to the formation of the English House of Commons. It was founded by a Scandinavian prince, named Orry, who, after conquering many of the western islands of Scotland, arrived at the Isle of Man about the year 938 A.D. with a large

fleet. He brought order out of the chaos which then existed in the Island, and established stable and popular government. King Orry instituted the House of Keys. He divided the Island into six districts called sheadings, every sheading having its coroner, who acted as sheriff and was intrusted with the peace of his district. The House of Keys was the lower House of the Insular Legislature, and consisted of twenty-four freeholders, sixteen being chosen in those days from the lands of Man, and eight from the Isles of the West of Scotland, which were under the sway of the Manx kings. King Orry died in 940, and his dynasty lasted till about the time of the invasion of England by William the Conqueror. Since that period the Island has been subject to vicissitudes of conquest and the changes of dynasty, but it has preserved its independence, and throughout the whole course of its history the House of Keys has at all times resisted encroachments on the liberties of the people.

“In the year 1417 Sir John Stanley, the then ‘King and Lord of Man,’ paid a visit to the Island. He settled the order of the Tynwald Assembly. At a Tynwald Court held at Castle Rushen in 1430, among other things it was enacted ‘that controversies be decided, not by the savage warfare of battle, but by the good and true in the country.’ It was settled that the House of Keys, which in King Orry’s days consisted of twenty-four members, sixteen from Man and eight from the outer Isles, should in future consist of twenty-four, all to be elected in Man, but subject to the approval of the King. In 1430, thirty-six were chosen by the whole commons of Man—from these the lieutenants chose twenty-four. In later days it came to be the custom for the Keys to hold office for life, and for vacancies to be filled up by election among themselves and the Governor. Thus the people came to have no voice in the election of those who constituted what had been in former times the popular House in the Legislature, and they had also lost the power which they possessed in ancient times of raising their voice and voting in the Tynwald Court on Midsummer Day.

“From being the freest and most popular of constitutions the insular government had become one of the most absolute, and this condition of things continued till 1866, when the Keys agreed to

their own dissolution, and an Act was obtained authorising a septennial House of Keys, elected by the people.

"The franchise in this election was given, in sheadings (counties) to owners of real estate of £8 annual value, and to occupiers of not less than £12 annual value, and in towns to owners and occupiers of not less than £8 annual value.

"This franchise has been felt to be too restricted, and a Bill was lately introduced by the Governor in the House of Keys to give the franchise to every male person who was a householder under certain conditions. In committee of the House of Keys, on November 5th, an amendment was moved by Mr. Richard Sherwood to omit the word 'male' for the purpose of extending the franchise to women who possessed the required qualification. This amendment was carried by 16 votes to 3, being a majority of more than five to one of those present and voting, and a vote of two-thirds of the whole number of the House of Keys."

"The Council (the other branch of the Manx Legislature), among whom there was a difference of opinion, agreed to give the franchise to all male and female owners of real estate of £4 annual value. They refused it to female occupiers and lodgers.

"On this being brought before the Keys, they gave up the lodger franchise for women; its effect in the Island is so trifling that they held it to be of little consequence as regards either men or women, but they adhered to the franchise for the woman occupier. The Bill thus altered was forwarded to the Council, and was again returned to the Keys with a message that the Council refused to agree. The Keys then proposed a compromise, raising the qualification for women occupiers to £20 a year. This again was refused, and the Keys were informed that the Council would reject the Bill if they stood out.

"A conference then took place, and the Keys came to the conclusion that it was advisable to get the concession to women owners secured, as thereby the principle of women's suffrage was conceded. They therefore agreed to the Bill, but they forwarded a protest, and passed a resolution that they agreed to the proposal simply to

secure the partial concession, rather than lose the whole; and that their opinion as to the equal rights of males and females remained unaltered. This was passed unanimously."

The Governor, Sir Henry Brougham Loch, gave his assent on December 21st, and on 5th January 1881 Her Majesty Queen Victoria gave her Royal assent.

The Act came into force on 31st January 1881, when it was formally promulgated from the Tynwald Hill.

The first election under the new electoral Act began on 21st March 1881. In the Ayre Sheading, the largest electoral division in the Island, women were the first at the poll at each of its four polling-stations, only two possible voters among them being absent. In Glenfalba Sheading, Mr. Sherwood, who had been leader of the movement in the House of Keys, received the votes of all the women voters, and was returned at the head of the poll. In Douglas, Mr. Stephen, the first candidate to give prominence to the question, was also at the head of the poll.

The women voters were pronounced to be quick, intelligent and business-like in their procedure, and they always knew for whom they wished to vote.

Here we may antedate the further progress in Man and record that the measure of 1880 was soon after completed by the extension of the qualification to women occupiers as well as owners.

### § 32. *Political Organizations and Women's Suffrage.*

Reference to the Parliamentary Chart, p. 101, will show that Mr. Hugh Mason's prolonged endeavours to



secure a day for a debate on his resolution prevailed at last, and a debate and division took place on 6th July 1883, which resulted in a much more favourable vote than that in the previous Parliament on Mr. Courtney's resolution—the figures being 114 ayes, 130 noes, as against 103 ayes and 217 noes in 1879.

This resolution was as a preliminary skirmish before the Reform Bill of the following year, and brightened the hopes of the workers for the coming battle. Great encouragement was also given by the great Conference of Liberal Associations, held at Leeds on October 17th, to consider Parliamentary reform. At that Conference, convened by the National Liberal Federation and the National Reform Union, 2000 delegates attended from all parts of the United Kingdom, including nine women delegates.<sup>1</sup>

After a resolution affirming that the same electoral rights should be conferred on householders in the counties as were enjoyed by those in boroughs, the Rev. Dr. Crosskey (Birmingham) moved as an addition to the former motion: "*That in the opinion of this meeting, any measure for the extension of the suffrage should confer the franchise on women, who, possessing*

<sup>1</sup> *Mid-Somerset Liberal Association.*—Mrs. Helen Bright Clark, Mrs. Tanner.

*Bristol Women's Liberal Association.*—Miss Emily Sturge, Miss Eva Tribe.

*Darlington Women's Liberal Association.*—Miss Lucas, Miss Muller.

*York Women's Liberal Association.*—Miss Anna Wilkinson.

*Morley Liberal Club.*—Mrs. Oliver Scatcherd.

*Midhurst Liberal Association.*—Miss Jane Cobden.

*the qualifications which entitle men to vote, have now the right of voting in all matters of local government."*

He said the Conference would stultify itself if it rejected this motion, and reminded them that ladies were taking part in the Conference, which had made no difference of sexes in the summons to attend.

Mr. Walter S. B. M'Laren (delegate from the Central Liberal Association of the North-West Riding of Yorkshire) seconded the rider, and reminded the Conference that there was nothing new in bringing the question before such an assembly. In 1874, at a Conference in London, and in 1876, at one convened by the National Reform Union in Manchester, amendments had been carried in favour of giving votes to women. During the preceding session of Parliament, a memorial, signed by 110 M.P.'s, had been presented to Mr. Gladstone, which stated that no measure for the extension of the franchise would be satisfactory unless it contained provision for giving the franchise to all persons, without distinction of sex, who possessed the necessary qualification. That memorial had been signed by Mr. John Morley, member for Newcastle-on-Tyne, who was president of this Conference, and by nearly every member of Parliament on the platform.

Miss Cobden (Mrs. Fisher-Unwin), daughter of the late Richard Cobden, said she heartily supported the resolution. She begged them, as representing the liberal principles of all England, to give it their hearty support. Mr. Carbutt, M.P., also supported; and Mrs. Bright Clark, daughter of the Hon. John Bright, said she was one of the delegates from a Liberal Association

which comprised among its members a very few women, therefore she thought she had a right to support the rider. There was in this country a considerable and an increasing number of women of strong Liberal convictions, who felt keenly their exclusion from the Parliamentary suffrage. They sympathized with the efforts of Liberal statesmen in the past; they knew how faithfully and loyally to follow; but they felt they must originate for themselves sometimes.

Mrs. Clark's speech was followed by loud cheers, and when, after the original resolution had been unanimously carried, it was put with the rider, this was carried too by a very large majority, amid great cheering.

### § 33. *Mr. Woodall's Amendment.*

When on 1st May 1884 the Reform Bill went into Committee, Mr. Woodall at once gave notice to add a new clause in Committee, providing that words importing the masculine gender should include women, Baron de Worms seconding on the Conservative side.

Already there were signs of the coming battle. Members who were supporters of the Government had been given to understand that Mr. Woodall's amendment was regarded as dangerous to the Bill itself, and that the Government meant to oppose. Liberal members known to be favourable to the inclusion of women householders in the Bill were informed, by the usual official channels for conveying the mind of the Government, that they were not to be free to exercise their judgment, nor to vote according to their honest con-

victions. Under these circumstances a memorial from seventy-nine Liberal members of Parliament was forwarded to Mr. Gladstone by Mr. Woodall with the following letter:—

“Queen Anne’s Mansion, St. James’ Park, S.W.,  
*June 9th, 1884.*”

“DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,—Very respectfully and very earnestly I commend the accompanying memorial to your favourable consideration.

“I wish I could convey to you any idea of the wide and deep interest which is felt in regard to this claim of women householders to the Parliamentary franchise, and to the importance of its recognition in the Bill now before Parliament.

“I would it were possible for me to tell you how confident is the belief (in spite of what has been said to the contrary) that you will not deny a hearing to a plea the abstract justice of which few deny, and which so many regard as invincible, under what you have termed the principal and central idea of your great measure of enfranchisement.

“The appeal, as you will see, is strongly supported; it is made in the hope that you will regard it as at once just and reasonable, and believing that your favourable assent is consistent with good policy, I remain, dear Mr. Gladstone, faithfully yours,

(Signed) “WM. WOODALL.”

The memorial with the list of signatures will be found in full in Appendix F. The following letter was sent by Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Woodall in reply to the memorial:—

“10 Downing Street, *June 10th.*”

“DEAR MR. WOODALL,—In acknowledging the receipt of your letter, let me say that I am very sensible of the kindness of its form, of the singleness of your motives, of your thorough attachment to the Franchise Bill, of the weight due to the signatures you have placed

before me, and of the just title which your subject possesses to full consideration at the proper time. But the question with what subjects, viewing the actual state of business and of parties, we can afford to deal in and by the Franchise Bill is a question in regard to which the undivided responsibility rests with the Government, and cannot be devolved by them upon any section, however respected, of the House of Commons. They have introduced into the Bill as much as, in their opinion, it can safely carry. The introduction of what it cannot safely carry endangers a measure which the heart and mind of the country alike desire and assent to. Such introduction would, therefore, on our part be a breach of the duty to the Bill and to the nation.—Believe me, yours, etc.,

“ W. E. GLADSTONE.”

The wide and deep interest of which Mr. Woodall speaks in his letter was further evidenced by a letter, signed by seventy-six representative women of the day, which was sent to every member of Parliament. This letter and the signatures appended will be found in Appendix G.

A letter also appeared in the *Times* with the signatures of Adeline Paulina Irby and Sophia Jex Blake, M.D., in which, “as two working women, who have hitherto taken little part in the agitation,” these ladies showed strong grounds in support of Mr. Woodall’s amendment, based on the principle of representative Government; they went on to protest against the idea that by “omitting female suffrage from the Reform Bill women will be left in *statu quo*, and no injury will be done them by passing the Bill in the first instance and leaving their case to be considered subsequently.” They pointed out that “This is thoroughly false on two grounds: first, by the extension of the suffrage to such

an enormous number of additional men, the position of the women will be sharply accentuated and made infinitely worse than before; the residuum of the unrepresented will have so diminished that practically every family will have its voice recognized, except the many thousands of families of every grade who have women as their heads." They pointed out also that the present Bill was avowedly intended to settle the franchise, at least for that generation, and that "to pass it without doing justice to women" would indefinitely postpone any measure for that purpose.

On June 10th Mr. Woodall moved his clause, and was followed by Mr. Gladstone, the burden of whose speech may be summed up in the two following sentences: "The cargo which the vessel carries is, in our opinion, a cargo as large as she can safely carry." "With regard to the proposal to introduce it into this Bill, I offer it the strongest opposition in my power, and I must disclaim and renounce all responsibility for the measure should my hon. friend succeed in inducing the Committee to adopt the amendment."

On the motion of Lord John Manners (afterwards Duke of Rutland) the debate was adjourned, to be resumed on June 12th, when Lord John Manners, as one who had taken a strong interest in the movement for a long series of years, maintained that it was in no sense a party question, nor was it in any sense a new question. But more important than the debate was the division.

"The true significance of the division may be estimated by an examination of the number of known friends of Women's Suffrage who voted on this occasion

in the Government majority. The number is no less than 104. If these 104 members had voted according to their previous wont and their avowed convictions, they would have been deducted from the 271 who voted against the clause—leaving 167 opponents—and, added to the 135 supporters, would have raised the vote in favour of the clause to 239. We may therefore assume that had the question been an open one, and the 406 members who took part in the division been free to vote according to their convictions, the clause would have been carried by a majority of seventy-two.”<sup>1</sup>

Many petitions were now addressed to the House of Lords in view of the Bill coming before them, and several references were made to the question during the discussion by the Peers. Lord Carnarvon, in particular, on opening the adjourned debate, used these emphatic words: “Where you enfranchise two million of persons, some of them confessedly illiterate and ignorant, many of them with a very small stake in the country, I cannot conceive upon what principle it is that you exclude a small class of persons who, by intelligence and every quality of fitness, are entitled to exercise the vote.”

The postponement of the final stages of the measure to an Autumn Session gave opportunity for further agitation; and at the Trade Union Congress, which met that year in Aberdeen, a resolution, “That this Congress is strongly of opinion that the franchise should be extended to women ratepayers,” was carried with but three dissentients. The resolution owed

<sup>1</sup> *Women's Suffrage Journal*, July 1884.

much to the forcible speech of Miss J. G. Wilkinson (Secretary to the Upholstresses' Union, London). With sorrow one writes the name of that valiant spirit—in its frail tenement ever struggling for more light, more means to help her fellow-women. Instances of working men who have forged their way, through hard study, high up the ladder of achievement, are frequent in English story, but the instances in which women have done so are comparatively rare. Jeannette Gaury Wilkinson was one of these. All too late the suffrage movement learned to know her value; with hard study and hard work she had wrought beyond her strength, and passed away in August 1886, within three years of the time when she came down to lecture for the Bristol Society. Sound in judgment as she was vigorous in speech, she would, in these days of Labour Commissions and Labour Bills, have been a powerful help to the cause of working women. Her friends subscribed to place a marble slab on her grave in Forest Hill Cemetery. Truly of her it might be said, "She loved her fellow-women."

Another earnest speaker, one of whom it was truly said her oratory went straight to the hearts of her audience, had passed away not long before. Helena Pauline Downing died on March 8th, 1885, after a long and lingering illness. She was the niece of Mr. M'Carthy Downing, M.P., who represented the County of Cork from 1868 to 1879. Her addresses were full of force and fire, mingled with pathos and humour; and this little bright-eyed Irishwoman never failed to win the sympathy of her hearers.



In the autumn of 1884 the British Association visited Canada, and Miss Becker, for the first and only time during the years of her suffrage work, took a prolonged holiday, attending the Association and visiting relatives in the Dominion, while Caroline Biggs edited the *Women's Suffrage Journal* for September and October. The visit of the Association fell at an interesting time for the suffrage workers who followed it to Canada, for the Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, had introduced provisions for Women's Suffrage into an electoral Bill which was at that very time before the Dominion Parliament. The opportunity was taken to send an address of thanks to Sir John Macdonald, which was signed by eleven lady members of the British Association—Clara, Lady Rayleigh, Miss Becker, Mrs. Ashworth Hallett, Miss Sharman Crawford, Mrs. Cooke-Taylor, Mrs. Rebecca Moore, Miss Wilhelmina Hall (F.R. Met. Soc., P.L.G., Eastbourne), Mrs. Morrison Campbell Miller, Miss Helen Brown (St. Cuthbert's School, Edinburgh), Phœbe Blyth (Parochial Board, Edinburgh), Miss Maria S. Rye.

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## PART IV.

### FROM THE NEW REFORM ACT TO THE CLOSE OF MISS BECKER'S LIFE.

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#### CHAPTER IX.

##### AFTER THE THIRD REFORM ACT.

THE curtain had fallen on the second act of the drama. The Court of Common Pleas had brought the first act to an end when it closed the door to the old franchises. Now the Act which created large, new classes of voters had ended the second act by shutting the door to the new franchise against women.

They had used every legitimate and constitutional means that was open to them, yet they were left in the "residuum." Not one of the statesmen responsible for the new extension had taken heed of the fact so truly expressed in the letter quoted at page 163, that every extension of political freedom amongst men, leaves women in a more unequal position than before.

" P

Rac

Mr. King carried.  
noes, 157; majority for ayes, 71. Opposition tactics  
in the Committee stage.

On

Mr. d out.

by the Government.

" T

No

ays taken by Government up to Easter.

" T

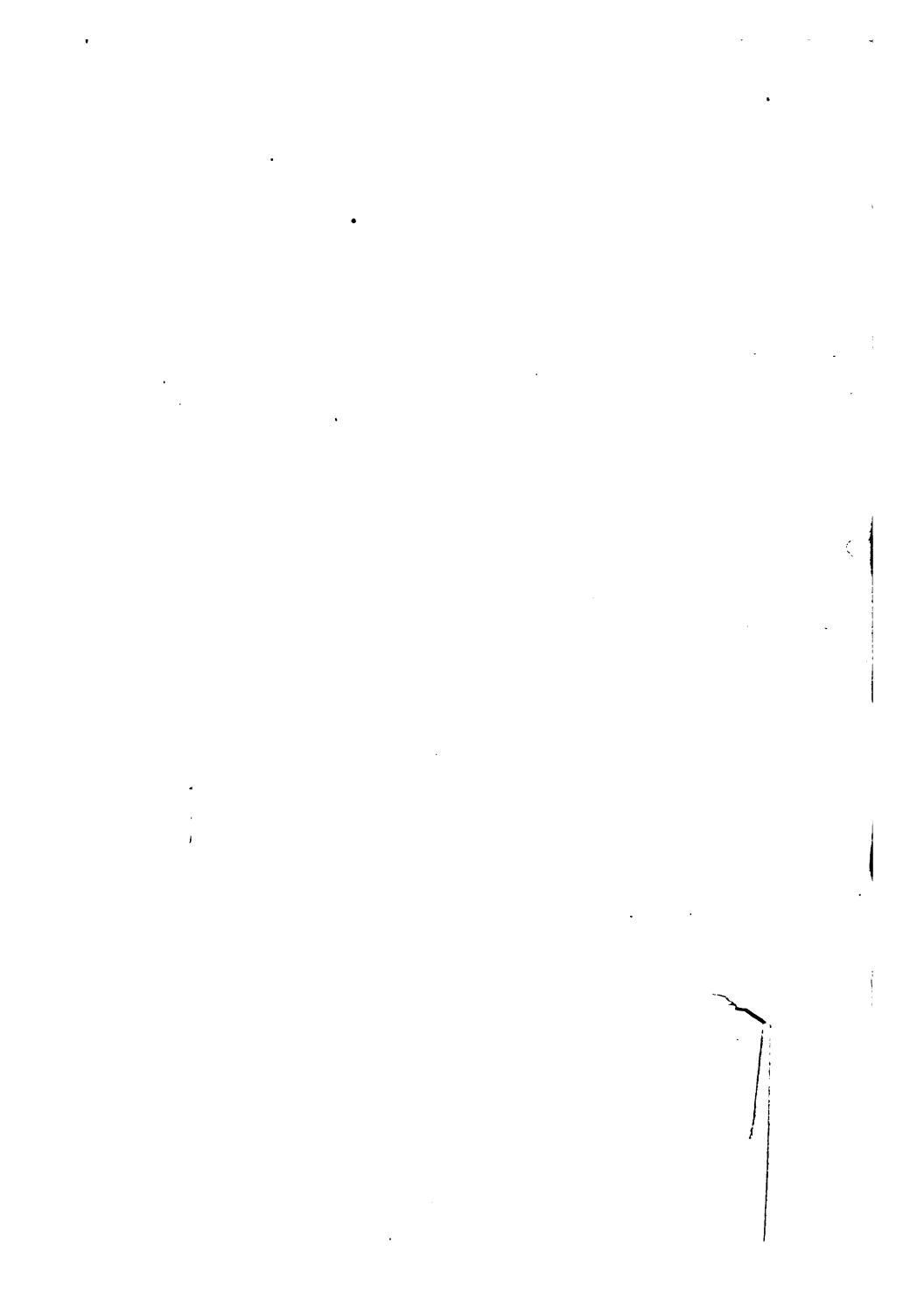
PA red and seventy-one had voted in favour in former  
ponents returned, of whom ninety-six had voted

Mr.

the day came Tuesdays had been taken for Govern-  
business.

By

By C



§ 34. *Changed Conditions.*

For a short moment there seemed a gleam of brightness. The session of 1886 opened with a new Parliament in which the number of known friends had mounted up to 314, and known opponents fallen to 104—and the first steps in the new House seemed to augur well, for on February 18th, thanks to Mr. Courtney's vigilance, the opportunity of the early closing of the debate on the address was seized to press on the Women's Suffrage Bill. Mr. Beresford Hope's motion to adjourn the House was thrown out by five; then Sir Henry James's motion to adjourn the Bill was thrown out by fifty-seven, with the understanding that the vote was tantamount to a vote for the Bill,—after which it passed second reading without a division.

Yet it was a barren victory; the Bill was blocked in its further stages, and in the summer another General Election was sprung on the country. At that election the number of friends returned was the highest yet known, being an absolute majority of the whole House. This proved that the new electorate were not hostile—but neither were they keen; from 1886 to 1892 no occasion for a debate was secured. The suffrage workers had to reconcile themselves to days of dull, patient plodding,—the bright hopefulness of the earlier times was gone out of the movement. Burning questions of Imperial unity were forcing themselves to the front, compelling attention. Almost, it might seem to the despondent, that all had to be begun over again—but not quite: what had been done could not be

undone, it had—to use the words of Thomas Carlyle—“already mixed itself with the ever-living, ever-working Universe.” The labours in the days of hope had left their mark; women were no longer outcasts from all the seats of learning; there were many, amongst teachers perhaps especially, who by this time realized “that there is nothing distinctive in the higher education of girls, but that higher education, which is culture of the mind itself for its own sake, is the same in character and object for girls and boys.” Women who wished to work were no longer isolated units, but had begun to attune their lives to a new note. “The keynote of our movement,” Miss Becker wrote in 1879, “is that woman is the *co-ordinate* not the *sub-ordinate* half of humanity, and this idea influences the whole scheme of our social fabric—it is, or is to be, the grand distinction between savage and civilized man.” How should the suffrage party best follow that note under the new conditions?

It was the period when the political *caucus* was at the height of its activity. Already it has been seen that party organizations had been appealed to on behalf of the political claims of women, and here and there women had themselves joined in party organizations. The suffrage question had, however, remained their central rallying point, irrespective of party considerations. Now women turned, not as independent suffragists, but as upholders of party ideas, to form organizations and work with men for party purposes.

The way had been prepared by the formation, in the previous two or three years, of a few Women's Liberal

Associations. Bristol had led the way, where, thanks to the energy of Miss Priestman and the co-operation of Miss Emily Sturge and other Liberal members of the Women's Suffrage Society, an association had been formed in 1881—to be called the Bristol Women's Liberal Association—its object being “to promote Liberal principles, and diffuse knowledge on political questions of general and local interest among the women of Bristol.”<sup>1</sup> Other associations followed in Darlington, York, and a few other places, on similar lines. But a new impetus was given to political organizations amongst women when the Primrose League, in 1885, instituted its Ladies' Grand Council, thus distinctly inviting their co-operation in the work of a League formed, “not to maintain any party or persons, but principles only”; “to uphold three clearly defined political principles”—principles which are “eminently conservative in the strictest sense of that word.”<sup>2</sup>

Many, no doubt, passed into the political work offered for the pleasure of helping their fathers, brothers and husbands; but very many also came to work in real earnest for underlying principles in which they firmly believed, and for which they rejoiced to work hand-in-hand with men.

This co-ordination of work spread so fast that presently the women who were grouped in isolated Liberal Associations felt that they too should have some federated life, and the Women's Liberal Federation was inaugurated in February 1887. Here and there a few women have

<sup>1</sup> Annual Report of Bristol Women's Liberal Association, 1882.

<sup>2</sup> Leaflet, “Why should I join the Primrose League?”

been admitted to the Liberal Five Hundred, or Three Hundred, or whatever the central consultative body of their city might be called; but the women's Liberal organizations, as organizations, have always been independent of those of the men.

After the cleavage of the great Liberal party, there sprang up the Women's Liberal Unionist Association. Thus, within three years of the passing of the Representation of the People's Act of 1884, which had refused them the rights of citizenship, women were justifying their claim, by the practical object-lesson of actual political work, on the lines of each of the great parties in the State.

Each of these organizations—the Primrose League, the Women's Liberal Federation, the Women's Liberal Unionist Association—were called into being to support certain principles in the State, wholly irrespective of their personal status as voteless persons. Their personal views on the franchise had no bearing on their collective action as members of a political organization, so that they—and the Women's Liberal Associations especially—have brought on themselves the frequent reproach that they assist men to power, who afterwards use that power to deny them the simplest, quietest and most effective instrument for giving help to their principles.

But even those who stultify their own actions by their indifference—often more apparent than real—to the “pivot” question of the franchise, even they have contributed to throw down one of the chief bulwarks of the old resistance—the notion that “politics are unwomanly.”



Concurrently, changes were at work within the House of Commons itself, of more immediate import, so far as the Parliamentary conduct of the Women's Franchise Bill was concerned. Before these changes in the procedure of Parliament, the once well-nigh certain prospect of a debate on a fixed day, under a known leader, by degrees gave place to utter uncertainty, not only as to whether the Bill would have a day at all, but also as to who would introduce it, and consequently how it might be framed.

It was the perception of all the imminent changes of that period of obstruction which determined Miss Becker to apply herself to the formation of a committee of supporters of the question within Parliament itself. At length, in May 1887, matters were ripe for action, and the Manchester Committee resolved that a meeting of the members of Parliament, who were also members of their Committee, should be called in London, and Miss Becker was authorized to make the arrangements. The Central Committee also concurred, and invitations were issued, in the joint names of Mr. Wm. Woodall and Mr. J. W. Maclure, to all members connected with the Manchester and Central Societies and backers of the Bill, for a meeting in Committee Room 14 of the House of Commons on 10th June 1887.

At that meeting a Committee of the Parliamentary supporters of the Women's Franchise Bill was duly constituted, Mr. W. S. B. McLaren being appointed its Secretary on the Liberal side, and Captain Edwards Heathcote on the Conservative side. Thus was formed an authoritative nucleus of action which kept the

Parliamentary forces together during the remainder of the life of that Parliament. Seventy-one members in all gave their adhesion to the Committee; of these there are in the Parliament of 1901 only seventeen remaining. To record the details of the various steps taken, memorials and deputations to the Home Secretary, etc., were needless: the outcome will be seen in the second Chart of Parliamentary Events.

One circumstance may be noted, small in itself, yet significant of the changes which have been gradually going on. In those days Miss Becker, the accredited Parliamentary agent of the National Societies for Women's Suffrage, was never admitted to the deliberations of the Committee. Many a time the present writer has waited with her in the corridor, till the Committee was over, and the secretaries came to deliver their minutes into her keeping. In these later years, each time our Parliamentary supporters have met in conference, not only the secretaries, but all the delegates from the Societies in the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, have been allowed to attend, and they have been asked to give their opinions on the points under deliberation.

The speech of the Marquis of Salisbury on the Bill which Lord Denman, in spite of remonstrances repeatedly addressed to him, introduced again on January 30th, is the only incident that calls for record in this session. That speech once for all placed the attitude of the House of Lords towards the Bill on a distinct and definite basis. The Marquis of Salisbury said that he did not desire to express any opinion upon the subject

which the noble Lord had brought before the House not for the first time. It was, he admitted, a subject of very great interest, and one which had aroused much feeling among considerable sections of the community. But he would point out that it was not usual for one House of Parliament to initiate legislation which would alter the constitution of the other House. To initiate such legislation, though not beyond their powers, would be to a certain extent a breach of Parliamentary etiquette. The Government therefore proposed to reserve their opinion upon the subject-matter of the Bill until the question should have been dealt with in the other House. He begged to move that the Bill be read that day six months. This was passed without a division.

#### § 34. *Divided Counsels.*

All these changes and difficulties combined to bring about a vague discontent and restlessness within the Women's Suffrage Societies, such as had hitherto been unknown.

The difficulties were manifest, but their causes were not equally apparent, and, as in all periods of political unrest, there were not wanting those who thought to find a sure remedy for their discontent with the work of the Women's Suffrage Societies, in a change of machinery.

The desire to alter the organizations and methods of work, and the intrusion of party spirit into the neutrality hitherto so carefully preserved, gave rise to

divided counsels, which at the close of 1888 brought about a revision of the rules of the Central Committee. The outcome of this shaking of the Societies will be best described in the words of the *Women's Suffrage Journal* for January 1889.

“The net result of the proceedings in regard to the revision of the rules of the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage has been the dissolution of the society heretofore existing under that name, and the creation out of its constituent elements of two distinct societies. The one established by the new rules, on December 12th, under the title ‘Central National Society for Women's Suffrage,’ admits as affiliated bodies, entitled to send delegates to its Council, Associations organized for other purposes than the extension of the Parliamentary franchise to women. The other, established December 13th by the reconstruction under the old rules of the ‘Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage,’ admits as associated or affiliated bodies such Associations only as are organized for the sole object of obtaining the extension of the Parliamentary franchise for women.

“The division of the ‘Central Committee’ into two organizations may be regarded as an evidence of redundant energy in that section of the Women's Suffrage Society which has hitherto existed under that name. There are some living organisms in the animal world which increase by fission. The observer perceives an animalcule, perhaps moving a little slowly, as if conscious of some difficulty in progression. The two

extremities of the creature show signs of wanting to go in different directions. In a few minutes he looks again, and lo! instead of one, he beholds two organisms, each instinct with new life. Thus, the Central Committee, having divided into two parts, represents two organisms, each seeking new adherents, each gathering in its harvest in its own separate field, and each, we trust, destined to add its quota to the forces which will bring nearer the accomplishment of the object of the society."

The Press was quick, after its wont, to make the most of what savoured of a quarrel; but time has shown that Miss Becker appraised the division at its true value, when she replied as follows to an enquiring member of the Press fraternity:

"The facts are simply that the original Central Committee was in partnership with the Societies throughout the country on certain conditions. The Central wished to alter the arrangement, and proposed new conditions unacceptable to the other Societies. Whereupon the 'Central' broke the partnership by adopting the new conditions. The other Societies then simply reunited under the old rules with those members of the original Central who disapproved of the new conditions. Both Committees are now vigorously at work, and I see no reason why the only rivalry between them should not be the friendly one of which can do most work for the cause."

§ 36. *The Protest of the "Nineteenth Century."*

An opportunity for the friendly rivalry recommended in the letter just quoted speedily presented itself. In the June number of the *Nineteenth Century* a protest was printed, bearing the signatures of 104 ladies, well known in West-End drawing-rooms, in the following terms:—

"FEMALE SUFFRAGE.

"*A Women's Protest.*

"*The undersigned protest strongly against the proposed extension of the Parliamentary franchise to women, which they believe would be a measure distasteful to the great majority of the women of the country—unnecessary—and mischievous both to themselves and to the State.*"

Never before in the history of the agitation had such a step been known as a formulated expression of hostility from women.

This was, of course, the signal for a counter-blast. Immediately the offices in Great College Street and Parliament Street set a declaration in circulation:—

"The undersigned desire to express their approval of the proposed extension of the Parliamentary franchise to women, which they believe would be beneficial both to them and to the State."

The Editor of the *Fortnightly Review* consented to open his pages to the counter-list, which in a fortnight contained the names of two thousand women all more or less of a representative character. Space was found in

the July *Fortnightly* for six hundred of these, together with a reply from Mrs. Fawcett. The entire list of signatures to the declaration was afterwards published by the two Committees. An excellent reply also appeared in the *Manchester Examiner* and *Times*, written by Miss Becker, and reprinted as a pamphlet.

The declaration was the latest piece of work in which Caroline Ashurst Biggs took part. For many months it had been painful to see her combating the weakness that increased rapidly upon her, and at last on September 4th she faded from life.

## CHAPTER X.

### MISS BECKER'S DEATH.

#### § 37. *Times of Depression.*

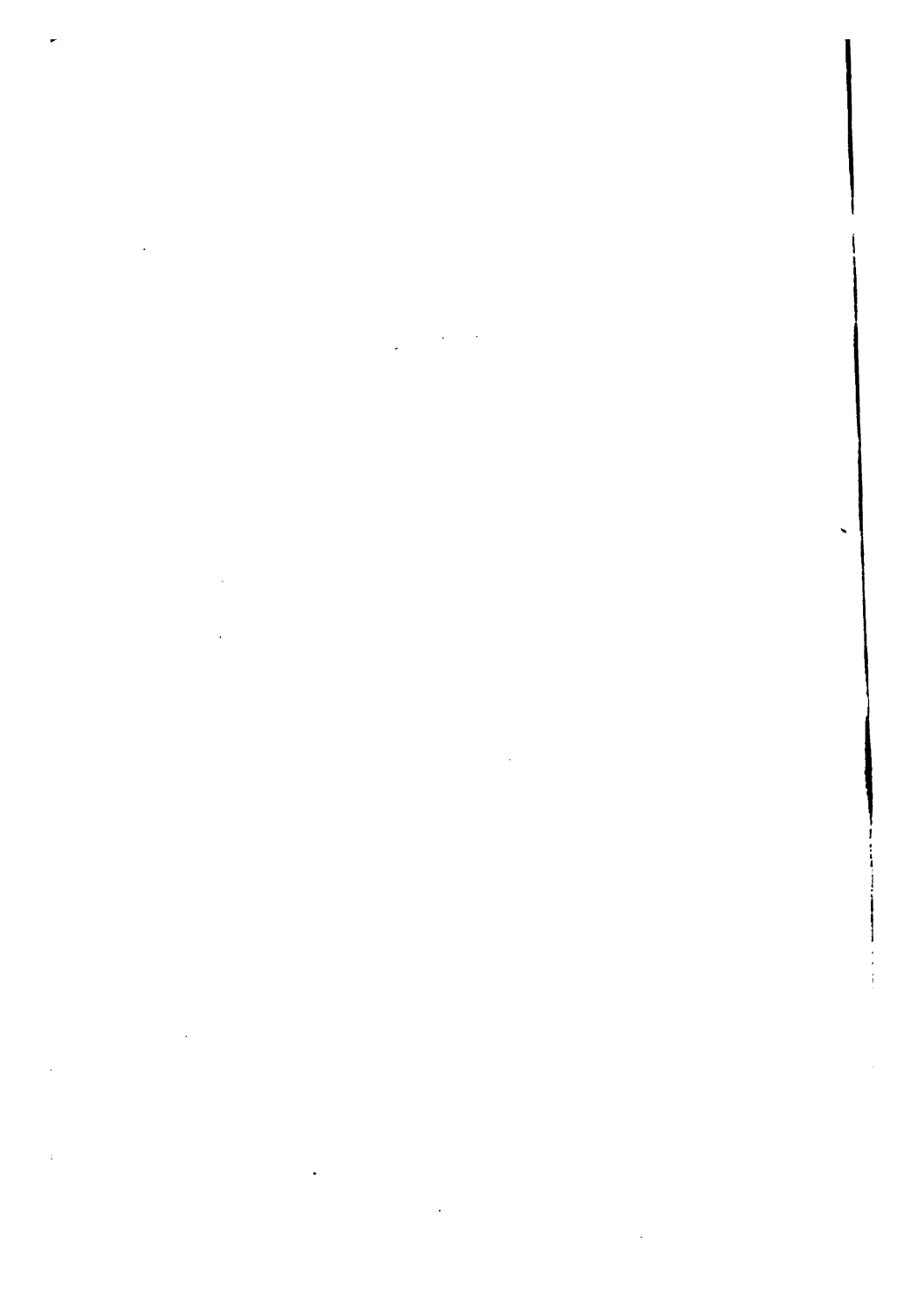
WHEN there was no longer any Bill before the House as a standard round which to rally the forces of the movement—no target for Parliamentary action—all plans for work lacked their wonted incentive: the flow of funds naturally slackened, and workers drifted off to other things—many throwing themselves, as has been already seen, into party work. All circumstances thus combined to bring increasing anxiety on the responsible leaders of the movement, and above all, therefore, on Miss Becker. Early in 1888 symptoms of loss of physical vigour had distressed her colleagues. She had always been liable to a sudden collapse of nervous power, after any specially anxious and severe effort—but these attacks, alarming though they were for those who saw them, never came during, but only after, the work that had caused them was done, and she recovered quickly from them. But now the prolonged anxiety was telling on her permanently.

The deep affections which lay under her stately





LYDIA ERNESTINE BECKER—II. (From a photograph taken in 1889.)



and reserved demeanour were often sorely tried in those days of divided counsels between old friends and co-workers. The difficulties that then penetrated into the Women's Suffrage policy were only the reflex action of the storm which was disturbing the whole political atmosphere of the country, and as such she regarded them, checking any personal feeling which younger and less tried workers might display. She took all these troublesome matters as part of the incidents of political work, to be met passively and impersonally, but the depression of the time fell with special heaviness on a leader of her sympathetic nature.

§ 38. *The Tragic End.*

In the winter of 1889-90, Miss Becker was almost entirely confined to her house, 155 Shrewsbury Street, Manchester, where she had lived since the death of her father in 1877. She fought on, doing her work on the *Women's Suffrage Journal* as usual, and welcoming the friends who came to beguile her hours of forced inaction with chess.

At last, in the spring of 1890, she became so much worse that she decided on going to Bath, where she placed herself under the charge of Dr. Spender. Her letters from Bath were cheerful, and her health improving in some degree she arranged to take a course of baths at Aix-les-Bains.

On her way through London she stayed a few days to take leave of her friends, and even attended a meeting of the Committee in Great College Street, on her way

to Waterloo Station, on the day of her departure. It seemed a serious journey for one in her crippled state; nevertheless, she started with only her maid, her immense courage making light of all difficulties; and seemingly with good reason, for her letters from Aix-les-Bains told of steady improvement, so much so that early in July she set out on an excursion into the Savoyard Alps.

Nothing can better show how little the tragic end was looked for than some passages from the letters written by her in these last days of her life to the present writer, to whom she had entrusted the care of the *Women's Suffrage Journal* during her absence.

In a letter dated July 6th she thus describes her arrival at St. Gervais-les-Bains: "Just arrived here and find your welcome letter and budget of newspapers, which I regard as a famished lion might look at a bone, after having had no news for some days. You must have thought I was lost, and so indeed I have been for the last two days—stuck in the bottom of a deep, damp hole from which escape seemed hard. I left Annecy on Thursday, *en route* for this place, which is reached by a cross-country railway, which strikes the beaten track from Geneva to Chamounix at a place called La Roche; the train passes up the wide valley of the Arne as far as Cluse, where the rail ends. The valley here contracts to a ravine, up which the diligence proceeds to Chamounix. The day was glorious and the country magnificent. When the diligence stopped at the point for St. Gervais, I found that the village was three or four miles off, and I had not arranged for a conveyance,—so I was, perforce,

obliged to stay the night at the Baths, which are situated at the bottom of a very narrow, wooded ravine with perpendicular sides. There is just room for the buildings and the torrent. The place struck a damp chill into my very bones, and I made up my mind to get away next day; but there set in such a perfect torrent of unintermittent rain that I had not the courage to stir out; and only this afternoon have I escaped, and am rejoicing in re-entering the world and again rejoicing in the open air. This little place is truly enchanting, and the air is like champagne. . . ."

The next letter, dated July 12th, seemed calculated to allay any anxiety as to the effects of the damp, chill ravine. It opened with reference to some plans, then under consideration, for enlarging the work in London, which occasioned her to remark: "If there was any hope of enlarging our sphere of action, it would be a factor in determining the question for me whether to settle permanently in London or Manchester. I believe there is more to be done for the cause in London than anywhere else just now." Then, after writing of some matters relating to the Journal, she added: "The air is most invigorating and seems enough to make one happy;" and concluded by saying that if the weather, then very rainy, improved, she meant to go on the following week to Chamounix.

Three days later she wrote again. The first pages were again occupied with directions as to the preparation of the report of the Annual Meeting of the Central Committee for the Journal; then followed words fraught with serious anxiety for her friends. She had been for

three days disabled by a severe attack in the throat, and was unable to take solid food, and had to "use the pen as an instrument of conversation and communication." She attributed the attack to having exposed herself to the damp, cold air during the rain—but one remembered that the mischief might have been begun in that chill, damp ravine, and worse might lie behind. "There is no regular doctor in this place, but fortunately there is a chemist who has practised medicine and has treated me very skilfully." "I am a prisoner in my room, which is very tantalizing, just as the glorious sunshine is spread over this enchanting scenery. But I should be thankful things are no worse. The attack might have been very serious if it had not been checked. It will be some days before I can be quite well again, and meantime there is nothing but patience and perseverance with remedial remedies. There are two very nice English ladies here—mother and daughter. . . . They are very sympathetic and often come to see me, which is cheering. It would have been very dreary to be ill alone among foreigners."

On the 17th July she wrote again. Her letter opened with reference to the annual meeting of the Central Committee which had just taken place, and then proceeded with some careful, minute directions as to the proofs of the speeches at the meeting. It then went on:—

"My illness has been very serious and I am afraid to think what might have happened if there had not been skilled medical attendance at hand. The *pharmacien* here has a diploma for medical practice, and has had

eight years' practice in Algeria. He has visited me three times a day to attend to the throat. To-day he brought in Dr. Bonnafoy of Sallanches, who has been twice and increased the vigour of the remedies. Both doctors pronounce me decidedly better, as indeed I feel, and they expect that in two days I shall be convalescent and able to take solid food. My experience of the French doctors is very satisfactory; they are so very capable and skilful. I must, of course, stay on here till I am quite restored, so please continue to send things. Papers of all sorts will be doubly welcome while I am such a close prisoner to my small room.

“My sleep has been much disturbed by dreams—no doubt caused by the discomfort and oppression in my throat. Oddly enough, no sooner do I drop off into a doze than my nightmare comes to rattle me off on travels. The first night it was always Chamounix that she kept constantly careering round. The second night she fixed on Porrentry in the Jura. Last night she scampered over the tops of the mountains about here. I cannot help wondering what part of the map she will select for to-night, if she is not yet tamed.—Yours ever,  
“L. E. B.”

That letter could not have been written more than a very few hours when the doctor perceived a change for the worse, and told her the only hope would be in the greater skill of a doctor in Geneva. With her resolute will she immediately decided to go to Geneva, first telegraphing the address of the doctor to her brothers, and begging them to come to her, for she was very ill of diphtheria. Then she started on that long drive of forty

miles, her maid her only attendant. The day was fine and the air seemed to brace her up; though she took out her watch and wrote—for she was too ill to speak—“I shall not live to get there.”

It was one of her maxims in life, that if we had but one day to live, we should try to make it as bright as we could, and she was true to her rule to the end: even on that terrible drive she took enjoyment in the glorious scenery they were passing through, pointing to some of its beauties.

She did indeed reach Geneva, but the doctor to whom she had an introduction was not at home, and before he could reach her at the *Clinique Juillard*, where she had been received, the vital force was spent.

Then the short telegraphic message, transfigured in the hearts of friends to the words of solemn soothing—she was not, for God took her.

### § 39. *In Memoriam.*

How those tidings fell on the hearts of the workers with her in the long struggle, is chronicled in many letters received by the present writer, of which the following are characteristic passages:—

Mrs. M'LAREN—(*on reading that last letter*).—“The conclusion is a poem, almost Ossianic, and is emblematic of and accords with the mental flights she was able to take in her best days. Oh, how she has left *us all* wondering as to where the last night's flight has carried her dauntless spirit. How little did she dream that it would be beyond 'that bourne from which no traveller



returns.' Surely she must have gone to a place of rest, to prepare for some further mission for the good of women. . . ."

Miss ARABELLA SHORE—(*on seeing the notice in the "Pall Mall"*).—"The woman's cause owes *everything* to her—she was the leader of the vanguard at the beginning and the chief supporter of it through all its first difficult years. . . . Truly, this is a rigid service she gave herself to. I hope, however, she had some happiness in it. I like to think my last intercourse with her was in a visit she paid us here, and to remember her intense enjoyment in scenery and flowers."

Miss FRANCES POWER COBBE—(*on reading in the "Globe"* that our "brave, good friend and champion" was dead).—"One has hardly time yet to think of the loss she will be to the cause of women, but it is *immeasurable*. . . . She did so long to see the fruit of her labours and, as she once told me, to pass on to other things."

Mrs. REBECCA MOORE.—"Her memory should be an inspiration to all who knew her."

SARAH LEWIN.—"There was much sweetness under that strong, dauntless manner."

#### § 40. *Afterwards.*

"The movement has got far beyond depending on any individual," Miss Becker had said as we were discussing probable outlooks together, a few weeks before she started for *Aix-les-Bains*. The uppermost thought now became, "how shall we make those words true?" for

however strong the determination of the Societies, the loss of her guiding spirit lay heavily on the work everywhere. The Manchester Committee was for a time as a body paralyzed. The Central Committee suffered grievously by the absence of her political acumen and knowledge of Parliamentary procedure, of which—as Mr. Courtney, himself a master of procedure, had said—she had a complete mastery.

The Journal, by means of which the workers had been kept in touch with the general news and with each other, and to which all turned as the guide to a common policy, was but scantily replaced by the Occasional Papers, issued at uncertain intervals from the office in Great College Street.

To members of Parliament, to the general public, to workers in the Colonies and United States, and indeed in every place where the question was alive, Miss Becker had been the visible head of the British movement.

## PART V.

FROM 1890 TO 1901.

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### CHAPTER XI.

#### RENEWED ENDEAVOURS.

##### § 41. *New Developments.*

THE difficulty of obtaining a day for second reading of the Women's Franchise Bill pursued the proceedings of the session of 1891, and many fears were entertained that the Wednesday—May 13—on which Mr. Woodall had obtained a place, might be sacrificed to the Whitsuntide holidays. It was sacrificed indeed, but in a manner no one could have foreseen.

Meantime, in the face of such a possibility, Mr. W. H. Smith, First Lord of the Treasury, consented to receive a deputation, introduced, on April 20th, by Viscount Wolmer. The deputation (*viz.*, Mrs. Fawcett, Lady Goldsmid, Miss Emily Davies and Miss Blackburn) presented a memorial bearing the signatures of a number of

members of Parliament and other influential supporters, both men and women. The memorial pointed out that the most representative political gatherings that had taken place during the past seven years had affirmed the principle of Women's Suffrage.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> List of the various occasions on which resolutions in favour of extending the Parliamentary franchise to women, have been passed by representative gatherings of political organizations from 1833 to 1896.

The following were referred to in the memorial :

Parliamentary Reform Conference (Leeds, 17th Oct. 1833), representing the London and Counties Union, the National Liberal Federation and the National Reform Union, *by a large majority.*

National Liberal Federation, Annual Meeting (Bristol, November 1838).

National Reform Union, Annual Conference (Manchester, January 1844), *by a large majority.*

National Union of Conservative Associations of Scotland, Annual Conference (Glasgow, 1837), *by a large majority.*

National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations, Annual Conference (Oxford, November 1837).

Welsh Division of the National Union of Conservative Associations (Swansea, February 1838), *with two dissentients.*

National Reform Union, Annual Meeting of General Council (Manchester, 22nd May 1839).

Conservative party of North Devon Conference (Barnstaple, May 1839), *by an overwhelming majority.*

Lancashire and Cheshire Division of the National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations (Council Meeting at Lancaster, 29th June 1839), *with one dissentient.*

Northern Union of Conservative Associations, Annual Meeting (Newcastle-on-Tyne, 15th November 1839).

National Union of Conservative Associations of Scotland, Conference (Dundee, 14th November 1839), *by a very large majority.*

Birmingham Liberal Association, General Councils of "the Two Thousand" (Birmingham, 21st January 1891), *with one dissentient.*

For convenience of reference the resolutions of subsequent years may be added here :—

National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations,

The memorial pointed out the difficulty that had been experienced in obtaining a debate since the second reading in 1886, and prayed that the day appointed might be reserved for the discussion of a measure which suffered under the special disadvantage that those whom it chiefly concerned had no voting power with which to fortify their claim. The First Lord of the Treasury assured the deputation that, unforeseen contingencies apart, he had no intention of taking the day.

The Committee of Parliamentary friends met that afternoon, and on learning the result of the deputation, resolved to proceed with the Bill, and Mr. Haldane withdrew the resolution of which he had given notice as an alternative resource. On April 30th Mr. W. H. Smith moved that certain specified days should be appropriated to Government business. Mr. Gladstone insisted that Mr. Smith "should be perfectly uniform in the application of his rule," and take all Wednesdays or none. This proposal on the part of Mr. Gladstone afforded a manifest opportunity for shelving the Women's Franchise Bill. A debate of nearly an hour ensued. Finally, by a vote of 218 to 150 the Government had an unasked-for Wednesday forced upon them. The division shows a remarkable distribution of votes—

Annual Conference (Birmingham, 23rd November 1891), for the second time, *with a large majority.*

Scottish Branch of the Primrose League, Annual Meeting of the Grand Habitation (Edinburgh, 30th October 1891), *unanimously.*

National Union of Conservative Associations of Scotland, Annual Conference (Edinburgh, 8th November 1892), for the second time, *unanimously.*

National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations (Newcastle-on-Tyne, April 1894), for the third time, *with one dissident.*

the minority including 128 Conservatives as against 79 in the majority; the Gladstonian Liberals 27 in the minority as against 90 in the majority; the remainder being divided between Liberal Unionists and Nationalists—but in truth it was a snatch vote; many friends were absent. The whole story is so aptly summed up in *Punch's* Essence of Parliament that it cannot be better presented than in the words of that mirror of the passing day.

“Thursday—A pretty little game on to-night. Old Morality moved his Resolution taking power to appropriate Tuesday and Friday evening sittings, and all Wednesday for Irish Land Bill. In ordinary circumstances there would have been a stormy protest led from Front Opposition Bench against this inroad on time of private members. Other fish to fry to-night. Wednesday week assigned for second reading of Women's Suffrage Bill; if Government take that day for Irish Land Bill, obviously can't be utilized for furtherance of Woman's Rights.

“This is an awkward question for some members; don't like it, but daren't vote against it. Here's opportunity for getting rid of it by side-wind.

“Not necessary in arranging proceedings to mention Suffrage Bill, or even Wednesday, 13th of May.

“It was principle for which members struggled; the ‘principle of uniformity,’ as Mr. G. beautifully put it. ‘Let us,’ he said, though perhaps not quite in this phrase, ‘go the whole hog or none; take all the Wednesdays, or leave them.’ . . . .

“‘I'm inclined,’ said Mr. Woodall, ‘as a rule, to take kindly views of my fellow-men, to put the best construction upon their actions; but, upon my word, I'm not satisfied in my own mind that we advocates of Woman's Rights have not been made the victims of deep and dastardly design.’

“‘Order! Order!’ said Courtney; ‘no more am I.’

“Business done—Woman's Rights men dished.”

Before the summer was over, however, Lord Salisbury gave some compensating balance when he said, at the dinner of the United Club on July 15th : " I am bound, for the sake of record, and not to seem to have altered my opinion, to say that in my judgment whenever the question of the franchise is brought up, the question of releasing the restrictions which are now imposed on the voting of women will have to be considered."

Again, the words of Mr. A. J. Balfour, when addressing a large meeting of Unionists in the Theatre Hall, Bury, on October 22nd, were emphatic. " If you really mean to go in and deal with the anomalies of representation in the spirit of statesmen, you are bound to have Women's Suffrage."

Then in November came the enthusiastic vote of the National Union of Conservative Associations, who held their gathering that year in the Masonic Hall, Birmingham, on November 23rd, under the presidency of Mr. H. Byron Reed, M.P.

During the morning Conference Viscount Fielding moved : " That this Conference is of opinion that, when the question of representation of the people is reopened by Parliament, serious consideration should be given to the claims of women to be admitted to the franchise when entitled by ownership or occupation." In the short but comprehensive speech in which Viscount Fielding moved this resolution, he laid special stress on the prominence of labour questions, and their vital importance for the vast numbers of women employed in trades and in textile and other industries who would

be vitally affected by legislation on labour, trade and social questions.

Mr. James Rankin, M.P., having briefly seconded, the chairman stated that Mrs. Fawcett was present in the hall, and he begged to move that the Conference should hear her. The Conference then gave Mrs. Fawcett an enthusiastic reception as she came on the platform, accompanied by Mrs. Ashworth Hallett; and after listening to her statement of the nature and hope of the claim the Women's Suffrage Societies uphold, the resolution was carried by a large majority.

#### § 42. *The Debate of 1892.*

A reflex encouragement from that vote in Birmingham certainly made itself felt amongst the members of the Committee of Parliamentary friends, who met at the summons of the Honorary Secretaries at the opening of the session. Following the lines of the Birmingham resolution, it was agreed, at the instance of Sir Algernon Borthwick (Lord Glensesk), to introduce a Bill for extending the Parliamentary franchise to women on the local government registers. It was further agreed to try and obtain a day by a *plural* ballot. This indicates how much change Parliamentary procedure had undergone: the present writer well remembers how, about three years before, a trusted and steady friend on the Conservative side of the House, talking with Miss Becker in the lobby of the House of Commons, advised her to ask many members to ballot for the Bill. It sounded unparliamentary—nay, almost tricky to us then.



Soon after Mr. Woodall joined us, and Miss Becker told him what had been advised. He instantly replied: no; he would have none of it—it was not Parliamentary; but here in the Committee of M.P.'s themselves the action was deliberately resolved on. Sir Algernon Borthwick took immediate charge of the measure, and collected many promises to ballot. The best place was drawn by Sir Albert K. Rollit, who then took the Bill into his hands, and under his vigorous lead a debate of remarkably earnest and well-toned character took place on April 27th, Sir Albert Rollit opening with a clear and comprehensive statement of the question as a whole, and then a practical presentment of the special points of the Bill. Mr. Woodall seconded. Mr. Samuel Smith led, Prof. Bryce seconded, the opposition; Mr. Asquith and Sir Henry James also spoke against, while Mr. Wyndham, Mr. Courtney and Mr. A. J. Balfour supported the Bill; the latter concluding with the important declaration that when any further alteration of the franchise was brought up, “they would have to face and deal with the problem of Women’s Suffrage, and deal with it in a complete fashion.”

The division, which showed 152 for, 175 against, came as a surprise to both friends and foes. So vigorous had been the opposition that a very much larger hostile majority than twenty-three had been anticipated. The exertions of the opponents were beyond all precedent. First, they had tried to prolong the Easter recess over the 27th; but this met no encouragement from the leader of the House. Then they sent out a whip, signed by ten members on each side of the House,

earnestly requesting the presence of members, not later than 4.30, to vote against the measure. More than this, Mr. Gladstone had addressed a letter to Mr. Samuel Smith, which was widely circulated. The letter indeed only set forth the objections which had been heard in every debate—but the name of Mr. Gladstone lent its aid, there can be no doubt, in deterring votes.

Whatever its effect in the House, this letter had the effect of arousing a strong feeling of indignation amongst many women of the Liberal party, and added warmth to the discussion at the Annual General Meeting of the Women's Liberal Federation, a few weeks later, as to how far the question should be taken up by the Federation—and it was thenceforth admitted as a specified subject on their programme, though not as yet made what is known as a "test" question.

The Annual Meeting of the Central Committee followed on May 31st, Sir Algernon Borthwick presiding. Mr. George Wyndham, Prof. Jebb, and Lady Knightley all spoke for the first time on the platform of the Society.

§ 43. *The Appeal from Women.*

“AN APPEAL FROM WOMEN

OF ALL PARTIES AND ALL CLASSES.

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“*To the Members of the House of Commons.*”

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“GENTLEMEN,—Many of the women who sign this appeal differ in opinion on other political questions, but all are of one mind that the continued denial of the franchise to women, while it is at the same time being gradually extended amongst men, is at once unjust and inexpedient.

“In our homes it fosters the impression that women’s opinion on questions of public interest is of no value to the nation, while the fact of women having no votes lessens the representative character of the House of Commons.

“In the factory and workshop it places power to restrict women’s work in the hands of men who are working alongside of women whom they too often treat as rivals rather than as fellow-workers.

“In Parliament it prevents men from realizing how one-sided are many of the laws affecting women.

“We therefore earnestly beg you to support any well-considered measure for the extension of the Parliamentary franchise to women.”

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The debate of 1892 sent a thrill of fresh life through the Committees. Now came the question how to sustain and utilize the reviving energy.

Those who are unable to give force to their opinions through the power of the vote have always the constitutional right of petition, as a means of appealing to the governing authority. Petitions have, however, of late

years lost their significance. The very ease with which they can be prepared, thanks to facilities of printing and post-office arrangements, has brought them into discredit. They seem now to savour of the mechanical process, rather than to convey a spontaneous expression. They are very rarely read out to the House, as should become a petition worthy to be presented to the august assembly of elected legislators—they are, as a rule, presented in a perfunctory way, seen only by the M.P. who presents them, laid on the table, and swept off with briefest record in the Report of Petitions.

A scheme was therefore this year formulated in the office at 10 Great College Street for a general appeal from women throughout the United Kingdom, which should testify to the personal interest taken by the collectors and should bring the whole mass of signatures under the attention of each member.

The scheme was well received by the workers for suffrage—so well indeed that the first arrangements proposed were modified so as to place the working of the appeal in the hands of a Special Committee, constituted specially for this purpose, consisting of persons connected with various women's organizations, and with a temporary office and offices of its own. The arrangement was cumbersome in its working, but led to greater interest being taken by many prominent workers in other directions, and eventually led up to the combined Parliamentary Committee, which was the precursor of the reorganization of the Societies into a national union in the autumn of 1897.

The small books for collecting signatures circulated

far and wide, penetrating into many a remote corner. Then, as they returned eventually to the Appeal Office, filled with signatures, these were sorted into their constituencies and pasted on sheets, so as to be formed into volumes county by county. Three thousand five hundred persons had helped in collecting the names, and 140 meetings had been held—some in drawing-rooms, some in cottages, some in public rooms—at which new workers were enlisted and signatures obtained. So that by the session of 1894, when it had been proposed that the appeal should be presented, the aggregate of signatures amounted to 248,000. The Committee felt satisfied that the appeal had fulfilled their original hope, and had received the support of women of all classes, parties and occupations. It was difficult amongst such numbers to trace all the special names of note, but the signatures included the heads of nearly all the colleges for women and of a large proportion of the head mistresses of High and other Public Schools for girls, and of women serving on Boards of Guardians and School Boards. The leading women in the medical profession signed, and a number of the most eminent in literature and art, besides many of wide social influence, and many leading workers in the various movements for general well-being.<sup>1</sup>

Now came the solemn question of the mode of presentation. Miss Becker had often said that if women could plead their own cause at the Bar of the House, it would be speedily granted. Would it be possible that this appeal, from such a mass of women, and representative of all parts of the country and all classes of the com-

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Appeal Committee, July 1894.

munity, might be presented, by ladies delegated from the Special Committee, at the Bar of the House? At least the question might be asked, and Lord Wolmer placed the matter before Mr. Speaker Peel. But there was no precedent. The most careful search through the Commons Journals had yielded none which precisely fitted, and the Speaker demurred to create what might be construed into an inconvenient precedent. How could the unrepresented appellants enforce their plea contrary to precedent? Miss Becker's powerful mind might have been able to convince to the contrary and show this was a wholly unique occasion, one which it was inconceivable should create a precedent in a constitutional country—for they were the only body of persons who could lay their claim as an unrepresented half of the adult community. But as things were, the only course open was to ask that when Viscount Wolmer's instruction on the Registration Bill came forward, the appeal might be placed within the precincts of the House, so that it might be seen and examined by members. A petition, signed by all the members of the Special Appeal Committee,<sup>1</sup> was prepared for presentation to the House

<sup>1</sup>The members of the Special Appeal Committee were :—(England)—*President*, Mrs. Fawcett ; *Treasurer*, Mrs. Frank Morrison. The Lady Frances Balfour, Miss Balfour, Miss Helen Blackburn, Mrs. Leonard Courtney, The Lady Knightley, Mrs. Eva M'Laren, Mrs. Massingberd, Miss Mordan, Mrs. Wynford Philipps, Mrs. Broadley Reid, The Lady Henry Somerset, Mrs. T. Taylor (Chipchase), Miss Vernon. (Scotland) —*Hon. President*, The Rt. Hon. the Countess of Aberdeen ; *President*, Mrs. Priscilla Bright M'Laren. The Lady Frances Balfour, Miss Balfour, Miss M. Cunninghame, Mrs. Muir Dowie, Mrs. Lindsay Forbes, Miss E. Scott Kirkland, Miss Lees, Miss Methven, Miss Flora Stevenson, Miss Louisa Stevenson, Mrs. Lang Todd, Miss Wigham.

of Commons when the time came, praying their consideration of the document.

The Speaker gave permission that at the proposed time the appeal should be placed in the Library of the House. However, it became apparent that there was no hope of the Registration Bill reaching the stage for an instruction that session, so that all these arrangements were deferred, and the further fortunes of the Appeal come into this story again in 1896.

#### § 44. *A Mixed Record.*

The Parliament elected in July 1892 has the distinction of being the only Parliament elected since this agitation began in which no debate took place on the measure. This may be attributable to the short life of the Parliament; it is certainly not due to any falling off of friendly members. The ratio of known friends exceeded the ratio of known opponents as heretofore, both amongst former members re-elected and amongst newly elected members. In addition to this, the Societies had cause for great satisfaction, in that, when the session of 1893 opened, they were able to announce that Viscount Wolmer, M.P., had consented to take the Parliamentary leadership. This was in itself an assurance that no opportunity would pass unheeded.

The Committee of Parliamentary friends was not formally reconstituted, but it was understood that they would be called together whenever a meeting should be found advisable. The hopes of the leaders in this Parliament centred chiefly on the Registration Bill

introduced by the Government, as affording opportunity for moving an amendment providing for the registration of women. Accordingly, as soon as the ruling of the Speaker allowed that such an amendment would be in order, Lord Wolmer gave notice to move in Committee "that it be an instruction to the Committee that they have power to deal with the registration of women." Meantime, an effort had been made for a Bill, Mr. Charles M'Laren obtaining a second place—but he was preceded by the Rating of Machinery Bill, which proved to be a machine capable of being utilized for crowding out the Suffrage Bill.

In 1894 the Registration Bill again provided the only loophole, but it was not destined to reach Committee stage. The session of 1895 was equally barren, and that from a reason of a peculiarly vexatious description—the illusory tactics of misguided friends of the suffrage cause. Here, perhaps, a few words should be said of a difficulty which greatly embarrassed the work at this period, even though in a certain sense it might seem like a sign of vigour, inasmuch as it is a sign of exuberant life when coteries crop up in many directions with intent to do service to a cause. Such coteries may be of much value working in their own sets, even when the magnificence of their titles seems disproportionate to the modesty of their numbers. But when such coteries force themselves into the lobbies of the House panoplied with a self-confidence only to be equalled by their inexperience, then indeed the consequences are disastrous. M.P.'s are irritated, the Press and the public are puzzled, and all suppose that these foolish



tactics are the counsels of the National Society. At the time this narrative has now reached, a certain coterie, with whose previous and subsequent vagaries there is no need to deal here, simply blocked the way for any progress. It was in this wise—Mr. W. S. B. M'Laren had obtained an excellent day for a resolution, but Mr. Macdona had set down a Bill which stood in a perfectly hopeless position on May 1st. Yielding to the pressure of the coterie aforesaid, he declined to withdraw his Bill and so to leave the way open for Mr. M'Laren's motion; consequently the one opportunity that occurred in the life of that Parliament was lost. Verily, it was a melancholy thing to see the eager hope on the faces of the little group of ladies who, on May 1st, gathered round Mr. Macdona in the lobby of the House, as he guided them to the Ladies' Gallery; they passed along with the look of those going to assured victory—but Mr. Macdona's Bill was preceded by a Corrupt Practices Bill, backed by Mr. Bolton and Sir Henry James, and one could only grieve to think how the hours would pass on and on and they would find their Bill left out in the cold.

It is cheering to turn back from these barren records to the news of the first great gain in the Colonies, when, after an endeavour carried on through seventeen years, the women of New Zealand were enfranchised by the Electoral Reform Act, to which His Excellency Lord Glasgow gave assent on 19th September 1893. A general election followed in a few weeks, so that the New Zealand women—British and Maori alike—were able to make immediate use of their newly acquired right.

The women of South Australia very quickly received equal rights by the passing of the Constitution Amendment Act in December 1894. But further details in regard to progress in these and the other parts of "Britain Beyond the Seas" will be best told in a supplementary chapter.

Although the Parliament of 1892-95 contributed nothing to the direct advance of the main question, it passed one Act which has an incidental bearing thereon. The Local Government Act of 1894, added to the Local Government and Local Electors Acts of 1888 for England and of 1889 for Scotland, completed the new scheme for local county government in Great Britain.

These Acts admit women on equal terms to the local government registers, but they differ as regards the married women's vote, and also as regards eligibility to office.

The latter point forms no part of the Women's Suffrage question. The right to vote is the symbol of that freedom from which no human being should be hopelessly debarred in a free country. Eligibility for office is a question of individual adaptability for the performance of special duties. Nevertheless, the ready imaginations of opponents have always been quick to treat these two distinct orders of circumstances as if they stood in the relation of cause and effect. It is not in virtue of their being on the local government register that women are now eligible for numerous administrative offices. They are eligible because, in the political division of labour, the law has left electors perfectly free to determine who shall be the proper

persons to act for them on Boards of Guardians, District and Parish Councils and School Boards, but has restricted electors in their area of choice for County Councils and Town Councils.

The Women's Suffrage movement is a movement to enable women to be *choosers* quite irrespective of the subsidiary question whether the electorate should be free to choose from a restricted or an unrestricted area, and the bearing which the Local Government Act of 1894 has upon the movement is this, that Mr. W. S. B. M'Laren brought forward a clause which was incorporated into the Act:—

“§ 43. For the purposes of this Act a woman shall not be disqualified by marriage for being on any local government register of electors, or for being an elector of any local authority, provided that husband and wife shall not both be qualified in respect of the same property.”

This defines the qualifications for placing some married women on the local government register, and thereby affords a precedent for defining their position in regard to the Parliamentary register, when the “Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women) Bill” becomes law.

#### § 45. *Onward Steps.*

The barren Parliament of 1892-95 was followed by one of more happy augury. The election of July 1895 sent back an increased proportion of old friends to Parliament, and a diminished proportion of old opponents. Although the Societies had reason to deplore that,

in consequence of the death of Lord Selborne, their leader, Viscount Wolmer, had entered the House of Lords, they had the good fortune of still having a leader possessed of much Parliamentary experience, as well as commanding the confidence of the House, in Mr. George Wyndham (M.P. for Dover).

The following letter, which Mr. Wyndham addressed early in 1896 to the Central Committee, indicates the policy with which the movement entered on this eighth Parliament :—

“We must face the probability that this reform of the franchise—although reasonable in itself, and capable of being carried out by itself in a short measure—is still not likely to be carried out, except as a part of, or in connection with, a larger measure for removing the more flagrant anomalies of our electoral system.

“But the admission of this probability by no means absolves us from the necessity of immediate action. On the contrary, since we have a new Parliament with, we may suppose, a long life before it, in the course of which some Reform Bill dealing at least with registration, and possibly with wider issues, is certain to be introduced, it is our duty to secure an early decision from the newly-elected House on the principle of removing the disqualification which debar women from the political rights they would otherwise enjoy. Such a decision, if favourable, would materially improve our prospects, by giving us a moral vantage ground from which to move amendments to any Reform Bill subsequently introduced.”

In addition to increased strength in Parliament, fresh strength had been brought into the organization of the Societies by the formation, at the close of 1895, of a joint committee of delegates of the chief societies with a view to united Parliamentary action. This was officered by new and vigorous Secretaries in Miss

Edith Palliser, who had taken up the labouring oar at Great College Street early in 1895, and Miss Esther Roper, B.A., who had entered on the Secretaryship of the Manchester Committee in 1893. The ballot had placed the Bill in the efficient hands of Mr. Faithfull Begg, and stood first on the orders of the day for May 20th. All seemed to point to a discussion and division on the Bill, and it was resolved to make application to the Speaker (Mr. Gully) to renew the permission granted by his predecessor that the Appeal, that had already waited two sessions, be shown in the Library of the House of Commons. Mr. Speaker, however, withheld his consent, and the Committee were in much perplexity, when it was suggested to them, on high authority, that an application for the use of Westminster Hall might be successful. An application was accordingly made to the Office of Works and leave granted. The ladies of the Appeal Committee received passes from the Commissioner of Works, by virtue of which they were able to enter the Hall, and arrange the documents for inspection, attending throughout the afternoon and evening of the 19th to show the M.P.'s, who came for that purpose, the signatures from their respective constituencies. The number of signatures had by this time amounted to 257,796, nearly every constituency in Great Britain being represented, and many in Ireland.

The volumes into which the signatures had been classified, constituency by constituency, occupied the long tables extending from the entrance end of the Hall, past the statue of Queen Mary up to that of James I., so that by a curious, unconscious irony this

appeal of women to regain their citizenship was arrayed before the statue of the monarch in whose reign that citizenship was first called in question. The unusual aspect of affairs in this usually empty Hall drew forth a question in the House of Commons, which revealed great uncertainty as to where the authority for the use of Westminster Hall resided, and that the Committee had been under a misunderstanding when they stated that permission had been granted by the Home Secretary. As explained by Mrs. Fawcett in a letter to the *Times*, they had understood from the Secretary of Works that the consent of the Home Secretary was necessary; and when all the arrangements were made to enable them to place their appeal in the Hall, they assumed it was due to the consent of the Home Secretary. It now appeared that his only part in the matter was to provide police to "prevent disorder and annoyance." The letter went on: "Perhaps he [the Home Secretary] will pardon us the more readily as he himself stated in the House on Tuesday that it was an unsettled question who has control over Westminster Hall. As we must not thank him for permission to use the Hall, we must content ourselves by thanking him for the services of the police, who prevented disorder and annoyance by lending us chairs and by showing us every kindness and courtesy."

At the Annual Meeting that year the Lady Frances Balfour was elected President of the Central Committee. In October a conference was held in Birmingham, to which delegates from all societies working for Women's Suffrage were invited, with intent to draw

all into closer relations. The societies which made Women's Suffrage their sole object on a non-party basis, coalesced as a National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, each with a definite area in which to work.

The death of Isabella M. S. Tod in December of that year made another wide gap in the ranks of the early workers. Her health had long been precarious, and more than once severe illnesses had attacked her during the visits she annually paid to London during the session, in order to watch the interests of Irish women in Parliament; but her energetic spirit had surmounted many attacks. The place she filled in the political work of Ireland was unique. It was of her own creation, by dint of her incessant watchfulness for the good of Ireland, and of the women of Ireland especially.

#### § 46. *The Second Reading of 1897.*

The session of 1897 opened with the most successful event yet recorded in these annals. Mr. Faithfull Begg was again the successful member at the ballot, and drew an early number, setting the Bill down for February 3rd, when it passed second reading by a majority of seventy-one.

When a second reading passed in 1886 the circumstances had been very different—the division had not been directly on the Bill, but on the question of adjournment. On the present occasion it was a direct vote on the Bill itself, as the opponents knew full well, for they were much on the alert and sent round an adverse whip signed by ten members taken equally from both

sides of the House. Such a division was an unmistakable indication that the steady growth of interest in the question in the country made itself felt in Parliament. The old opponents who were re-elected at the General Election of 1895 mustered in force on February 3rd; but they were exceeded in number by the old friends. Several new M.P.'s voted against, but a greater number voted in favour; moreover, this division did not show the whole strength of the movement, for 109 members, who were understood to be friendly, were absent. Those who voted formed a majority in each party in the House.

The debate itself was chiefly noticeable from the extraordinary levity with which the subject was treated by the mover and seconder of the rejection of the Bill, Mr. Radcliffe Cooke and Mr. Labouchere. The Bill was introduced by Mr. Faithfull Begg, in a speech giving sound and solid facts, and was ably seconded by Mr. Atherley Jones. Mr. Radcliffe Cooke tried to reduce it to the level of a pounds, shillings and pence calculation, pretending to measure the numbers interested by the numbers of subscribers to the different Committees whose reports he had examined, and to estimate their strength by their balance sheets. For Mr. Radcliffe Cooke balance sheets may be all in all, but those who work for this cause know they show but a small portion indeed of what is done by the many earnest women whose labour, without money and without price, is the mainstay; while the organized expenditure is but the wrappage, so to say, that gathers the volunteer work together in a coherent whole. Mr. Labouchere's efforts to make out that votes in



favour were but given in joke, and that the House regarded the whole thing as a huge joke, was sufficiently refuted by the strong phalanx of votes from steadfast friends. The Bill was set down for Committee on June 23rd, and signs of work appeared in many directions. The Women's Liberal Unionist Association at their annual meeting passed a resolution asking the Government to reserve a day for the Bill; the Women's Liberal Federation included Women's Suffrage in the subjects submitted to their associations; the Women's Co-operative Guild, with a membership of 10,000 of the most capable and thoughtful of the working women of the country, discussed the subject at the general conferences of each of the five sections into which the Guild is divided and at each conference a resolution was passed, declaring the conference in favour of the principle of Women's Suffrage, and recording its satisfaction that the Bill passed second reading with so large a majority.

Petitions came in larger numbers than for any other public questions, and over 100 meetings were held, of which about one-third were drawing-room meetings, one-third public meetings, and the rest in connection with various Women's Liberal Associations and British Women's Temperance Associations.

So the work rolled on—alas! not in every case wisely. A petition, calling on the House of Commons to reform its procedure, sent up from a small meeting wholly independent of the National organization of Women's Suffrage Societies, brought many remonstrances from members of Parliament down on the Secretaries of these Societies. Nor was this the only way from

which the work suffered. To the surprise of all the leaders of the work in the House and out of it, it was found that on March 8th Lord Templetown had introduced a Bill in the House of Lords, and no representations availed to induce him to recede from the position which he had taken at the instance of the same coterie to which reference has been made already in the case of Mr. Macdonald's Bill. The result of this unfortunate action on the part of a friendly Peer may be given in the words of Mrs. Hallett's speech at the Annual Meeting of the Bristol and West of England Society on March 27th: "Contrary to the earnestly expressed wish of the Suffrage Societies, Lord Templetown introduced a Bill in the Lords, and many people thought it was the same Bill which is waiting for the Committee stage in the Commons. But this was not the case. Unfortunately, Lord Salisbury was at Windsor when Lord Templetown's Bill was introduced, and he asked the Duke of Devonshire to give the House the advice which he (Lord Salisbury) would have given, if present. The advice was not to deal with the question until the Bill had in due course been sent up from the Commons. The Duke stated that the Government had decided to leave the question an open one, but he also took upon himself, contrary to ordinary etiquette, to administer a rebuke to the Lower House. He said he 'regretted the levity with which the proposal was sanctioned' by the Commons, and 'his opinion of the reputation of the Commons for sobriety of judgment had not been enhanced.' As everybody knows the levity was on the side of the opponents, while the

supporters were in sober earnest. Comments, like these make people realize how different would be the tone used towards a Bill which had been discussed inside and outside of Parliament for twenty-five years if the petition for it had proceeded from men—from those who had votes. The Duke of Devonshire and Mr. Chamberlain have both done their best to encourage women to organize and work for the Liberal Unionist cause. Women now wonder at the levity with which these two men sanctioned the hard political work in which they encouraged women to engage, and naturally their opinion of the sobriety and judgment of these political leaders has not been enhanced when they find them trying to shut these same women out from the privilege and duty of exercising the franchise for themselves.”<sup>1</sup>

The day on which the Bill was down to go into Committee, June 23rd, was absorbed by the celebrations of the Diamond Jubilee of the Great Queen. It stood adjourned therefore to July 7th. This was the latest date which the Government had been able to leave for private members' Bills; consequently the opponents of the measure so manipulated the seemingly equitable rule that Bills which had reached Committee stage before Whitsuntide should be taken in turn, that the chances of the Bill were destroyed. It was in this wise. A Bill for the Registration of Plumbers stood next before the Women's Franchise Bill. Numerous hon. members found enough to say about this little Bill to prolong its discussion into the 7th of July. Then, when it had at last

<sup>1</sup> See *Englishwoman's Review*, July 1897.

been suffered to pass, a Bill on the disagreeable subject of vermin, which awaited its turn next in order, and should have been becomingly dealt with by a brief and dry discussion, was made a handle by Mr. Labouchere and others for prolonged discussion until the whole time at disposal of private members was used up; and once more women found their serious claims set aside by what even the *Times* described as "an undignified shuffle."

The Annual Meeting of the Central Committee took place a week later, and Lady Frances Balfour, who presided, reflected the feeling of the Society when she said, "There were many who thought they ought to be severely discouraged by the events of the last few days; but she had never felt in better heart." The same spirit animated the statement of policy issued by the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, which set forth as the aim of the Union to place the question "in such a position that no Government, of whatever party, shall be able to touch questions relating to representation without, at the same time, removing the electoral disabilities of women."

The years which have followed have given little scope for prominent work—the pressure of the great questions of Imperial importance which have absorbed the country, have for the time overshadowed quiet, domestic reforms—and the years 1898-99 have no special tale to tell. But even as Balder of old "could hear the grass grow," so those who listen can hear the quiet, silent growth, though there be no debates or divisions to record. Take, for instance, the enthusiastic gathering in Queen's Hall, Langham Place, to greet the delegates

from foreign lands who visited these shores, when the National Councils of Women in the United States and nine other countries held their quinquennial conference in London in June and July 1899. Take the formation within the Women's Liberal Federation of a Union of Practical Suffragists, bent on bringing about the policy that women who believe in the righteousness of their claim to vote should refrain from helping its opponents into Parliament. Take, above all, the fact that has become gradually apparent in the past few years, that the increase in the number of adherents demanded an alteration of method in carrying on the work. The early pioneers of the movement had made a breach in the wall, but the growing army behind them now required more detailed organization in order to make their full weight felt.

The force was there, but the question now presented itself of how to bring it to bear upon the constituencies while keeping it in touch with the Central organization. This new method of work was initiated at the beginning of 1897, when Miss Stone (one of the signatories to the first petition), Miss Jenner, Miss Sterling, and Miss Edith Palliser drew up a scheme, by means of which the sympathizers with the movement are organized in their constituencies and brought into direct contact with the Central Office.

Take, further, the petition from 29,000 women working in the factory mills of Lancashire, which was brought up from Lancashire by a deputation of fifteen working women escorted by Miss Roper, and placed in the hands of a group of friendly M.P.'s, who met

them in one of the committee rooms of the House of Commons on 18th March 1901.

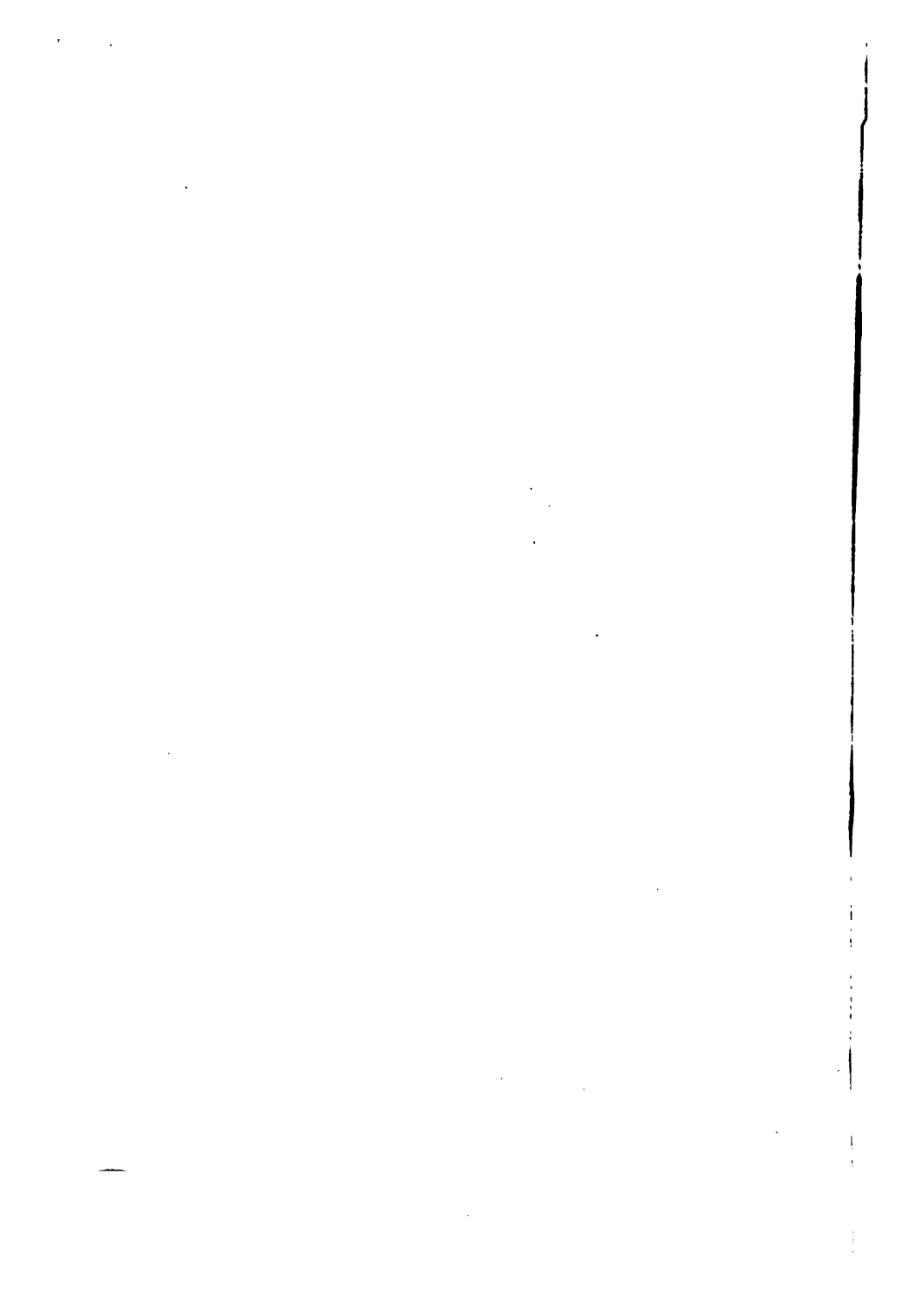
Take yet again a memorial presented in the autumn of 1901 to the first Lord of the Treasury, which differed from all previous petitions, memorials or appeals to the Legislature on this question, in that its signatories were not from the wide outer class of sympathizers, but from the inner circle of workers who by active deeds have contributed to the movement through a long series of years. The signatures—1168 in number—were arranged in the order of the years in which each joined the movement from 1866 onwards, so that the whole formed a record of its continuity and cumulative growth of the movement.

Finally, take the remarkable development of public spirit amongst women in Ireland since the passing of the Poor Law Guardian Act of 1896 and the Local Government Act of 1898, which—as the Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association truly says, in its leaflet of suggestions to workers—“has opened up a boundless field of useful public work for philanthropic Irishwomen.” Work on which philanthropic Irishwomen are showing themselves well prepared to enter, encouraged and stimulated by the energy, the sympathy, and the experience of Mrs. Haslam, and by the valued co-operation of Mr. Haslam, who throughout all the years of her work has been her most helpful and sympathetic coadjutor.

Such signs as these betoken that the movement goes on incessantly, with a steady continuity of growth from the first beginnings up to this new Parliament, new reign, and new century.



MRS. J. T. HASLAM (ANNA MARIA FISHER). (From a photograph  
taken in 1901.)





## CHAPTER XII.

### THE PRESENT POSITION.

#### § 47. *The Election of 1900.*

A SIGNIFICANT feature of the present position of the movement is the change of temper of the opposition.

“How does an ordinary man of the world answer when he is asked if he is in favour of women voting?” Viscountess Amberley asked in her lecture at Stroud in 1870, and then added: “He does not say, ‘I am afraid of their influence at elections; they will all be Tories.’ He does not say it would subvert the political and social order of things; they would all be Radicals. No; he generally smiles benignly and says, ‘I don’t think ladies wish for it,’ and turning, if he can, to some pretty, doll-like girl, he will appeal to her to confirm his statement.”

But though some still appeal to the doll-like girl, the things that Lady Amberley, in 1870, found they did not say, are the very things that most opponents say now. Men on each side expect that the vote will be a leap in the dark in favour of the other side, whichever that happens to be—and opportunists on either side in these days wish for evidence of the truth of Miss J. G. Wilkinson’s

assertion, at the Trades Union Congress at Aberdeen in 1884, "that it is absurd to suppose women will vote all Conservative or all Radical; they will do nothing of the kind;" they have only to take the trouble to look round and see the work which has been done by women in the General Elections of recent years, and most especially in that of October 1900, when their work exceeded that of any previous occasion, and, moreover, presented some unusual features, owing to the absence of many of the candidates at the seat of war in South Africa.

In North Wilts Lady Dickson Poynder addressed a letter to the electors, asking them to support her husband, Sir John Dickson Poynder, then on his way home from the front. In the Kendal division of Westmorland, Mrs. Bagot, wife of Major Bagot, M.P., issued an election address, signed by herself, *Dosia Bagot*. Other ladies addressed meetings and organized electioneering work on behalf of their absent husbands, receiving the thanks afterwards of the constituents for the services they had rendered.

After the elections were over, many candidates, belonging to each of the political parties in the State, spoke in highly appreciative terms of the help given them by women. The *Primrose League Gazette* for November and December 1900 contains many extracts from candidates, in which grateful reference is made to the work of the ladies of the Primrose League. Many expressions from both Liberal and Conservative candidates—sometimes supporters, sometimes opponents of the enfranchisement of women—might be quoted, as

equally ready to publicly acknowledge the services of women during the elections; but it will be sufficient to quote the testimony of the first Lord of the Treasury, speaking at a meeting of the Primrose League in Westminster Town Hall on December 5th: "I regard you, ladies and gentlemen, as one of the greatest means by which this danger [the danger of apathy] may be mitigated or avoided. It is your organized energy which throws into every part of the machine, life, spirit and fire. It is you who see at the critical moment how the forces are to be brought up; it is you who take care that no man shall say in the quiet leisure of his own room, how excellent is the Conservative cause, but how little is it worth while to go to the poll and vote for it. . . . Ladies and gentlemen, I congratulate you upon the work you have done in the past."

Such words as these are as distinct evidence as can well be desired that the old objection that it is unwomanly to take part in politics has been completely removed by the changed conditions of our social environment. Nevertheless, prejudice dies hard. If its passage is barred in one direction, it seeks to make itself a fresh outlet in another, and its latest direction is to admit that it is quite right that women should make themselves of use; that they are most efficient in telling Dick, Tom and Harry how to use their votes; but that it could be no possible use to them to be themselves possessed of that small fraction of power, that six-millionth part of the nation's voice: for them it is only waste of energy to try to get such a little bit of power; they have far more scope for their energies in sweeping in other people's bits of power.

Such is the drift of argument by which even women actively working in political organizations are sometimes dissuaded from desiring the vote, and the opposition triumphantly try to imagine that women do not want it.

Let us for a moment put an analogous case. In the days of the Great King, whose millenary has just been celebrated, those who could read were few, it was a distinction to be able to read, it was not a necessity for a life of average usefulness; many an able and intelligent man and woman lived useful and respected lives without a knowledge of the alphabet. Now a man or woman who could not read would be regarded as a being of blighted intelligence, and is practically cut off from any large share in the interests of those around him. The power to read has taken its place as a necessity of civilized existence.

It is not valued for any *prestige* it gives, but as a necessary tool for the most commonplace needs of life. And so with the vote. Once it was a trust in the hands of a very few who looked on the many as their dependants; step by step it has been extended to the many until it has become the symbol of citizenship. There is no personal distinction in its possession, but the man incapable of possessing it is out of touch with the wider life pulsating round him.

To claim the vote for women who would be qualified if they were men is only another way of saying that the average woman should have her full average part in the living interests round her.

Take it all in all, the election of 1900 shows the growing acceptance of this view. The old and tried

friends of the movement, those who have voted steadily year after year for thirty years, are now indeed few ; for the last election was the occasion of the retirement from Parliamentary life of many of the steadiest friends. It was a heavy loss to lose at one stroke, so to say, three of the former leaders of the Bill—Rt. Hon. Leonard Courtney, Mr. William Woodall, Mr. Faithfull Begg ; and such constant friends as Sir E. T. Gourley, who had voted in every division since 1870 ; Mr. Staveley Hill, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, also steady voters since 1870 ; the Rt. Hon. Lewis Fry, Col. Cotton-Jodrell, Sir William Wedderburn, Sir H. Howorth, Mr. Carvell Williams, and Mr. James Stuart, all friends through many years of Parliamentary life.

Since the elections the melancholy death of the Rt. Hon. W. W. B. Beach has removed the only member of the House of Commons of 1901 who had voted in every Parliament in which the measure has been debated from 1867 onwards. Thus Mr. Beach was the father of the Women's Suffrage movement, as well as of the House of Commons ; and here there is satisfaction in recalling that thrice before "Fathers" of the Commons have been steady supporters of this cause—General Forester, member for Much Wenlock from 1828 to 1874 ; Mr. Christopher Talbot, member for Glamorganshire from 1830 to 1890 (both of whom like Mr. Beach first voted with Mr. John Stuart Mill in 1867) ; and the Rt. Hon. C. P. Villiers, member for Wolverhampton from 1835 to 1899, whose support dated from the first introduction of the Women's Suffrage Bill in 1870.

A cause which attracts the life-long support of men

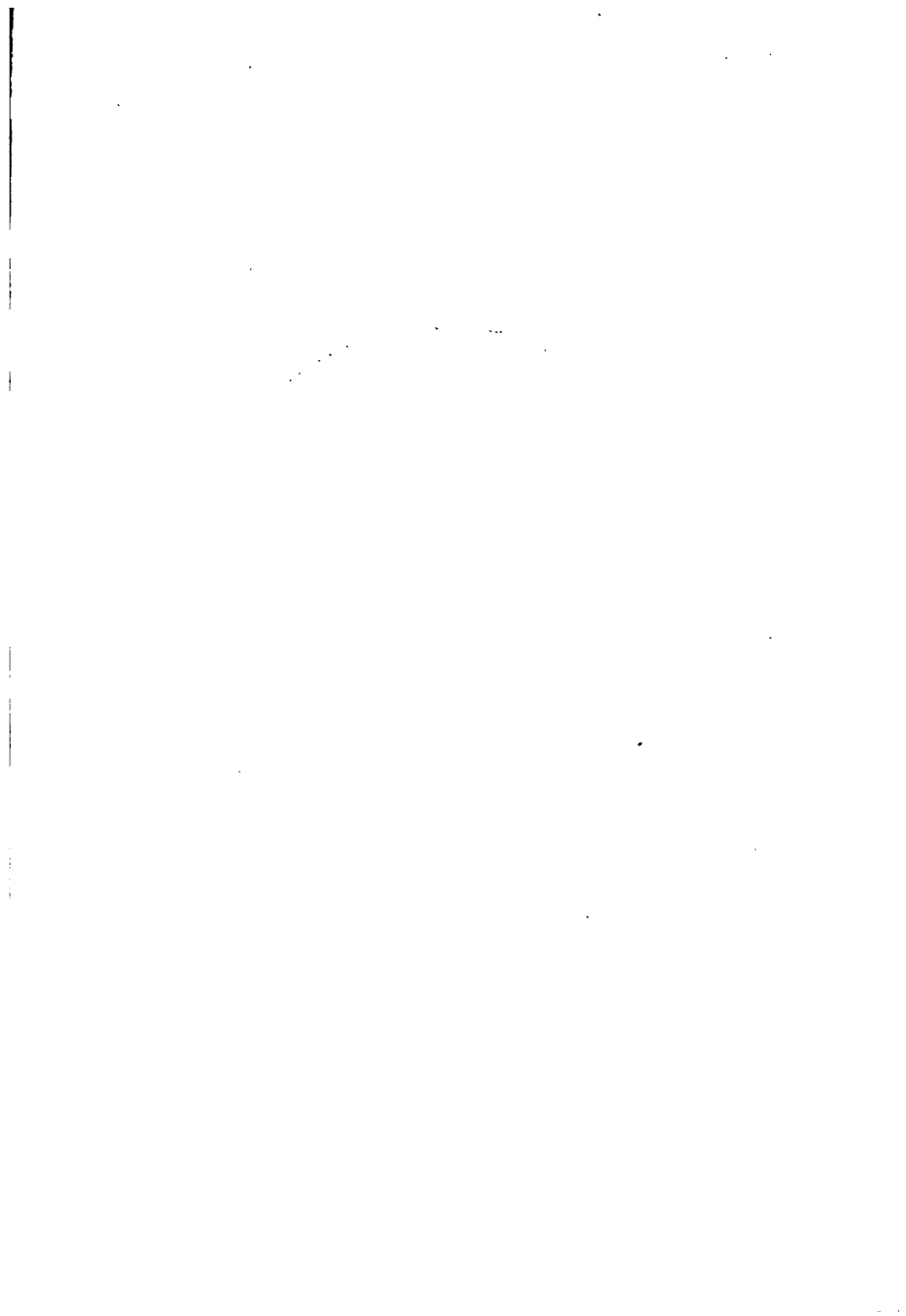
such as these, and which at every general election increases its new friends and diminishes its new opponents, can well go forward rejoicing that "in calmness and confidence lies its strength"—the calmness that gives judgment, the confidence that gives steadfastness of purpose.

§ 48. *Changes in the Victorian Era.*

A TABLE OF CHANGES IN THE ACTIVITIES OF WOMEN IN THE REIGN OF THE GREAT QUEEN.

1837.	1901.
NOT ONE High School in the land.	High Schools in every town.
NOT ONE University Class.	2000 Graduates, 1500 Certificated Students, and 8 Honorary LL.D.'s.
Doctors and Trained Nurses UNHEARD OF.	400 Registered Medical Women, practicing at home and beyond the seas.
	On the Roll of the Royal Nurses' Pension Fund, 9000.
Systematic Training, Professional or Technical, NOT THOUGHT OF.	Technical Classes, Schools of Domestic Economy steadily increasing.
NOT ONE organization of Women for Women.	Organizations among women cover the country as a network—welfare of children, girls, mothers, nurses, emigrants, for sanitary, education and political work.
Right to their earnings and other property denied to married women.	Own all their earnings and other Property.
Rights of Mothers, NIL.	Mothers share in appointing and being appointed Guardians.
With the illustrious exception of the THRONE, and the humble exception of the Overseer, No woman was regarded as entitled to fill any public position.	On more than half the Poor Law Unions and 236 School Boards Women serve. 28 large Boroughs employ some 50 Sanitary Inspectors, etc., etc.

To those who can read between its lines how much the above brief table means—each of the main lines of





EMILY DAVIES, LL.D. (From a photograph taken in 1901.)



endeavour thus grouped together means strenuous, persevering endeavour of good women aided by good and enlightened men. And more than this—it means that those who have been foremost in forcing open the gates of knowledge and in winning leave to serve the State, have been the most strongly convinced of the essential need for recognized citizenship of women.

It may be well to glance at each group in turn.

*High Schools.*—Have not the words of the founder of the High School system, Mrs. Wm. Grey, been recorded in these pages?

*University classes.*—Were not the pioneer workers for Women's Suffrage the same who opened the doors of the University examinations and founded the first college for women? Have not the Scotch Universities honoured the suffrage movement and themselves by conferring the honorary degree of LL.D. at St. Andrews on Mrs. Fawcett (the first woman so distinguished), and at the recent jubilee of Glasgow University on Miss Emily Davies.

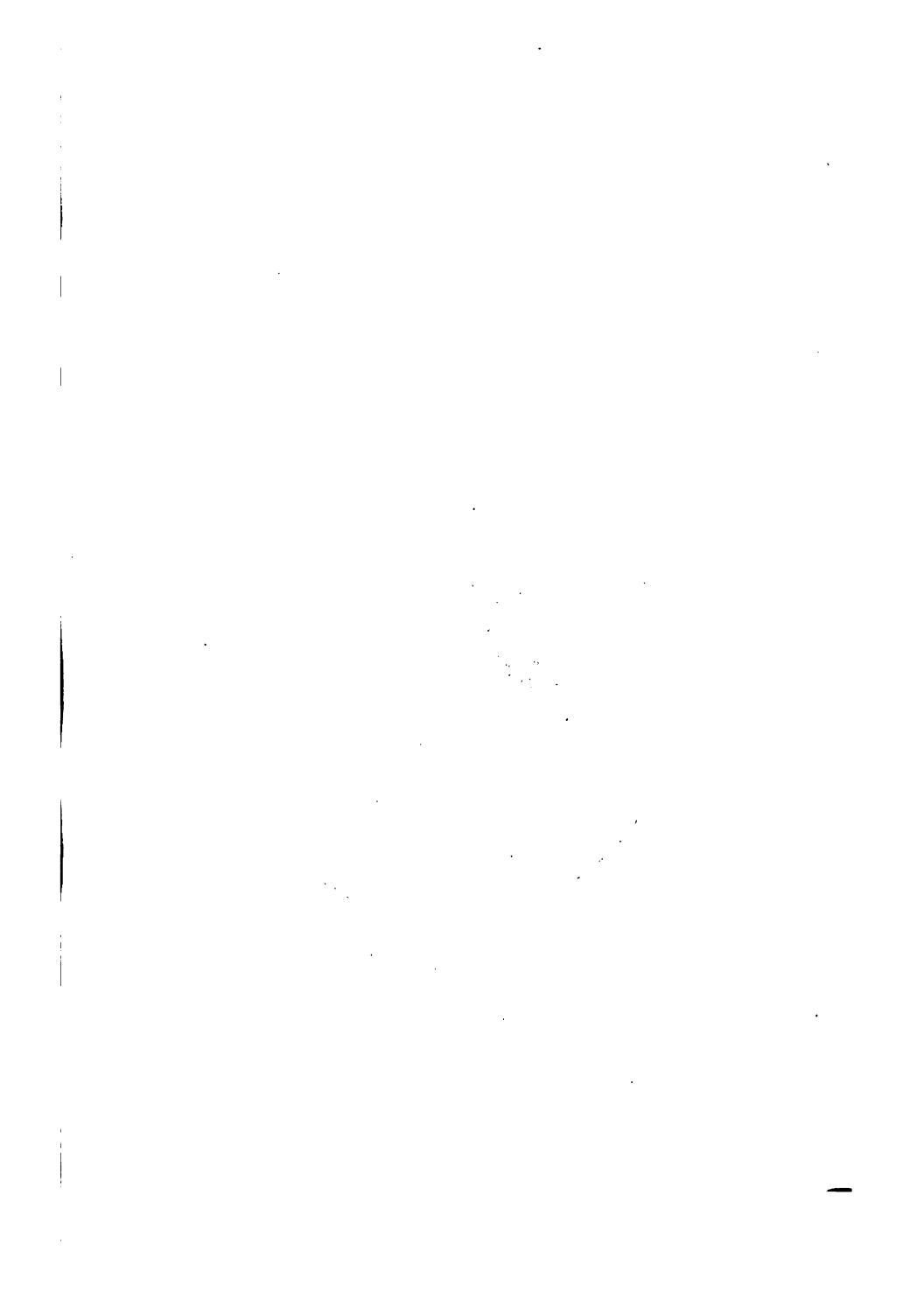
*Medicine.*—The pioneer names in that profession—Elizabeth Garrett, Sophia Jex Blake, were not they amongst the early supporters?—forerunners of many suffrage sympathizers in the profession they have opened to women. There are still a few left who remember the thrill of satisfaction in the Suffrage Committees when, in 1868, Florence Nightingale's name was added to the list of members of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, where it abides to this day.

*Systematic training* in domestic arts.—Who ever thought of such things until women had begun to realize their need of an equal status as ratepayers?

Then it was that a Jessie Boucherett, a Barbara Corlett could uphold the need of such systematic training as should give higher value to the work of women, whether within the home or outside the home.

*Organizations.*—Did not Mary Carpenter, that first and best friend of the street arab and juvenile criminal, write, only three months before her death (in 1877), that she warmly sympathized in the Women's Suffrage movement, though unable to take any part in it owing to other engagements. Did not Mrs. Nassau Senior, the friend of the workhouse girl (founder of the M.A.B.Y.S. and indirectly of G.F.S.), write, after the debate of 1875, that she felt it a duty to do her utmost to promote the success of the measure, regardless of any effect it might probably have on her chances of future employment under the Local Government Board? Where have the children of the State found a steadier friend than Miss Florence Davenport-Hill, originator, as already recorded, of the West of England organization for the suffrage?

In *Emigration*, Maria Rye and Mrs. Beddoe; in *Temperance*, Mrs. Samuel Lucas, first President of the British Women's Temperance Association, Mrs. Arthur Tanner, Miss I. M. S. Tod. In fact, every name that has been prominent in the roll of the suffrage workers has, at one time or another, in one organization or another, been prominent in collateral work for the common good. As regards reforms in legislation affecting wives and mothers, there was not a single suffrage meeting in the early years which did not give





FLORA STEVENSON.

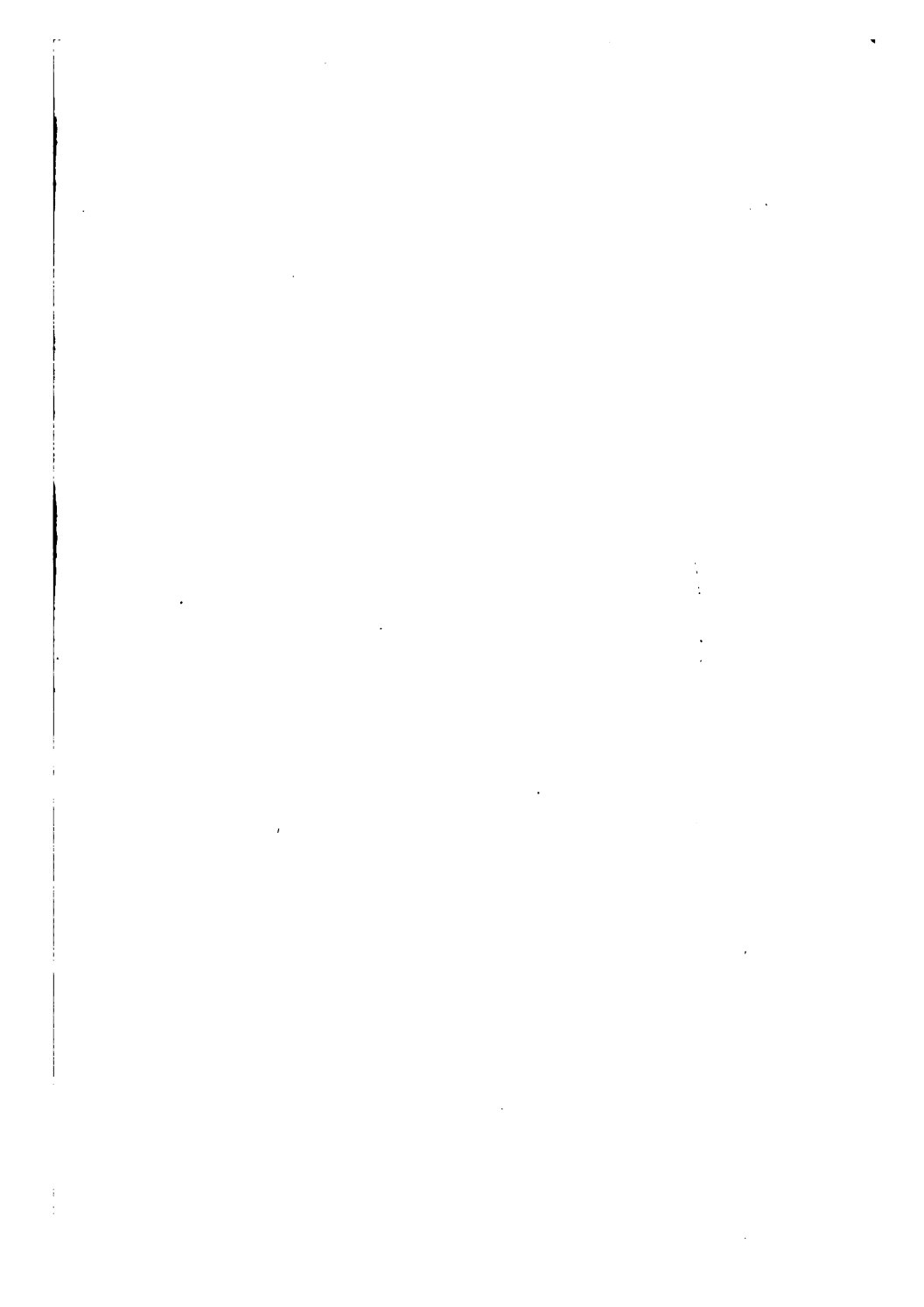
a helping hand to the efforts of those working for juster laws. The combatants, truly, for those reforms were many; while Mrs. Jacob Bright and Mrs. Wolstenholme Elmy were foremost as bearers of the standard at the day of victory. As regards *Public office*—it was in accordance with the truest fitness of things that Miss Becker should be the first woman elected by the vote of the people on the first School Board—an election reaffirmed again and again by the parents of the Manchester school children, who, when canvassed by male candidates, used gratefully to say “we must keep a vote for Lydia.” The Hon. Secretary of the Bristol Society, Emily Sturge, in like manner received the support of the people’s vote from her first election in 1880 until her fatal accident in 1892. In 1900 Miss Flora Stevenson was elected chairman of the Edinburgh School Board, of which she had been a member since its formation. She already had the distinction of being the first woman appointed in Scotland on a Departmental Committee (Habitual Offenders). Her sister, Louisa Stevenson, is associated with Poor Law work, and both are pillars of the Scottish Suffrage Society.

In *Poor Law Work* what woman stands forth as so truly a pioneer as Miss Louisa Twining, ever a steady supporter of the suffrage, as are also all the prominent women guardians of the poor. While at the time these words are written the most prominent upholder of the movement in England, Mrs. Fawcett, is doing service to the State as a Commissioner to the Concentration Camps in South Africa.

But there is a reverse side. The table at the head

of this section records only gains; there have been losses also, as indeed may be seen by reference to the table of statutes affecting women in Appendix H. To deny women's title to be parishioners, as was done by the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874, was a distinct falling off from the ancient spirit of parochial government. Again, the recent example of the loss of their position as members of vestries, in consequence of the reorganization of the governing bodies in the metropolitan boroughs into Borough Councils, is a direct effect of the absence of the elementary right of citizenship. Without the power of the vote, such slipping back was only too easy, as we knew, in the past; now we have learned that it is easy in the present also, even when the capacity of women to be of use to the community is admitted. In the labour legislation which has been so prolific in recent years, women have been systematically degraded to the position of children, and every fresh lamentation over their hardships as toilers has been met with a cry for more "protection"; that is to say, for another crutch on which to lean, rather than for an equal law to place them on a firm footing of their own.

How much of all the misery and squalor which our civilization has to combat in our great centres of population may be due to the elimination of the mother element in the dealings of the State, it were impossible to calculate; but who can wonder if those who are fighting social evils find that they are aggravated by the separation of the domestic and civic duties of women—or shall we say, to be more matter of fact, that





LOUISA STEVENSON.



they are lessened in proportion as that separation is minimized. Who can say how much the standard of respect for women is lowered, for those who make the law their standard of right and wrong, by the fact that they are stamped by law as unworthy of the elementary right of citizenship, which men hold so dear.

Do some still say: women have gained so much without having votes; they really ought to be content? Then it is because they have not yet learned how insecure is every gain which has been won by those who are unrepresented. To bid women rest content with anything short of direct representation, is to bid them plant their feet on shifting sand rather than on solid ground.

#### § 49. *The Enduring Claim.*

Parliament has changed the qualifications for electors; women have widened their public activities; the opposition has changed its standpoint. But the claim itself remains unchanged, in all except the cumulative force that comes of persistent endeavour carried on through an entire generation.

Men and women immersed in the calls of the moment, be it calls of study, of pleasure, or of bread-winning, to such a degree as to have no thought beyond *effects*, do not care, nor ever will care about the vote. But those whose thoughts travel beyond effects and search out *causes* desire it; and it is those who link cause with effect who make the world move on.

That the claim should be most insistent in lands peopled by the Anglo-Saxon race is no accidental cir-

cumstance, but an inevitable result of the historical evolution of a race which, let it be remembered, at the time when it first fell under the influence of Christianity—the only form of faith which teaches the equal value of every human soul—still retained that freer life for women which marks the earliest civilizations of all Aryan peoples. A race for whom the life of walled cities was unknown; one which had not developed that rigid division of labour and hard and fast juridical systems which accompany the life of walled cities. A race which has worked out its faith along lines of Christian teaching that encourage independence of thought, and has worked out its political institutions on the lines of looking to the judgment of each to bear on the common concerns of all. Such a race is carrying on its own highest traditions to an harmonious development by trusting both halves of the community to acquire the sign and symbol of citizenship.

Looked at thus from its wider bearings, the movement for the enfranchisement of women stands out as part of the stream of human endeavour towards that greatest power of the greatest number, which, when all is said, furnishes the best test of the worth of all human laws and institutions.

## SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER.

### COLONIAL PROGRESS.

#### § 50. *A General Survey.*

THE story of the Women's Suffrage movement at home scarcely seems complete without some record, however brief, of the kindred movement, developed under many diversities of conditions in Britain beyond the seas, and presenting various stages from nebulous hopes to actual achievement.

To begin with those Colonies where achievement has been reached. New Zealand stands out first, as earliest in the effort and earliest in its attainment. In New Zealand, as at home, the influence of John Stuart Mill made its mark, for the first presentment of the idea in that Colony appears to have been in articles and pamphlets by a correspondent of Mr. J. S. Mill, Mrs. Mary Muller.<sup>1</sup> Neither can it be forgotten that the two Colonies in which this reform has just been carried, both came very directly under the influence of the statesman who left so deep a mark on our Colonial

<sup>1</sup> See *New Zealand White Ribbon (Christchurch)*, edited by Mrs. Kate W. Sheppard.

Empire, and who was at the same time a strong upholder of the movement, the Right Hon. Sir George Grey. True, he had withdrawn from active official life before this question became prominent—but the influence of such a man reaches far down the years.

Australia presents the unique record of a Federation of States formed without the shedding of one drop of blood, and—may it be of happy augury—the unique record of having the votes of women mingled with those of men in its first Federal Parliament; for as the chronicle of events given below will show, South Australian and West Australian women were already enfranchised.

The movement in South Australia has this remarkable feature, that the question was debated and carried in the House of Assembly while as yet no organization had been formed, not a meeting held, not a petition presented. The agitation in the Colony followed the first victory in the Legislature.

Western Australia has this special record, that though the question had been more or less mooted in the Colony since 1893, owing in considerable measure to the migration of some of its earnest advocates from the Mother Colony of New South Wales to this youngest Colony, the organization of the Women's Franchise League was only formed in May 1899, and before the first year of its existence was closed, it had been transformed into the "Women's Electoral League" for the registration of women voters.

The Mother Colony is rapidly overtaking the swifter progress of these younger communities; and ever since

Sir Henry Parkes brought the question into prominence in his Electoral Bill of 1890, the movement has been spreading steadily and firmly—and now the vigorous organization of the New South Wales Womanhood Suffrage League, and the large majority in the House of Assembly in September 1901, gives every prospect that the day of achievement is very near.

Victoria presses closely on the steps of New South Wales—its story in one respect resembles the story in the old country; for in Victoria, in the beginning, women had votes, and the fact that they had them and they were taken away, has probably operated to the disadvantage of the movement. When once a right has been taken away it is harder to get it restored than to press on a new claim. [See Note, p. 244.]

Be that as it may, the signs of movement showed themselves earlier in Victoria than in any of the other Australian colonies; but there was a lack of something, probably best described as a lack of that concentration which comes of a good lead, such as Dr. Sterling and Sir Henry Parkes had given; so that for several years the Victorian Women's Suffrage agitation was unable to make itself felt in Parliament. However, in the last few years, a change has been apparent, largely due to the patience and tact of the late Annette Bear Crawford, who returned to settle in Australia after some years spent in England amongst women workers in this country. A United Council for Women's Suffrage was formed in 1894, and the various local organizations and scattered workers were drawn into co-ordinated work. This had marked effect in the General Election of 1894.

In 1895 the Premier, Mr. Turner, introduced a measure which has now passed the Legislative Assembly six times with increasing majorities; while the strength of the agitation, since the formation of the United National Council, has drawn forth a foil in the shape of an anti-suffrage remonstrance.

In Queensland and Tasmania organizations are at work; the Women's Christian Temperance Union, which has been an important aid in all Australasian agitations, has been especially helpful in Tasmania. But more than all is the prospect of an early federal franchise for women, since each of the four colonies where women have not yet been enfranchised have sent a majority of Women's Suffrage supporters to the Federal Parliament.

	For	Against	Not known
<sup>1</sup> <i>New South Wales.</i>			
Senate . . . . .	4	1	1
House of Representatives . . . . .	19	5	2
<i>Victoria.</i>			
Senate . . . . .	4	2	...
House of Representatives . . . . .	16	7	...
<i>Queensland.</i>			
Senate . . . . .	5	...	1
House of Representatives . . . . .	7	...	2
<i>Tasmania.</i>			
Senate . . . . .	4	...	2
House of Representatives . . . . .	4	1	1
<i>South Australia</i> } <i>West Australia</i> }	Women are already included in the Electorate.		

Mr. Barton, Premier of the Federated Parliament, speaking at the prize-giving of the Methodist Ladies' College, Melbourne, on 16th December 1901, used these

<sup>1</sup> These figures are taken from the *Australian Woman's Sphere*.

significant words: "When we instituted manhood suffrage in most of our States, we did not finish our work—and we will not have finished it until the franchise is extended to women. . . . One of my colleagues is going to bring in a Bill for that purpose, because we feel it will be for the good of Australia."

The conditions under which the question has shown itself in Canada differ widely from those of Australia. An obstacle unknown in Australia has been serious in Canada—the obstacle of a mixture of races. What English-speaking Ontario was ready for, French-speaking Quebec was still far from accepting. The Electoral Bill introduced by the Prime Minister, Sir J. A. Macdonald, in the Dominion Parliament in 1883, provided for the extension of the franchise to unmarried women possessing the qualifications required of men. The Bill was not finally carried until 1885, but the clause to enfranchise women was rejected after a debate of thirty-six hours.

Since then no attempt seems to have been made to bring the question before the Dominion Parliament. But much advance has been made in the different provinces in regard to local votes. Women now vote at municipal and School Board elections throughout the Dominion; their higher education has risen rapidly; their organizations for useful work for the benefit of the community, their industrial interests are all working together to show them the need of direct influence on those by whom they are governed.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the chapter on the Political Position of Canadian Women by Mrs. O. C. Edwards, of Montreal, in *Women of Canada*, compiled, at

There remains the South African colonies. Of these little can be said. The question has not yet come within sight. If mixture of races has been a source of delay in Canada, how much more must it have told against any advance hitherto in South Africa. But the duties laid upon women in the terrible South African upheaval, combined with their part as "Builders of the Empire" in the endeavour after reorganized life, will give them a claim when the days of settlement come, such as women have never had in colonial story.

§ 51. *Chronicle of Australasian Events.*

I. NEW ZEALAND.

Although the pamphlet previously mentioned was the earliest bit of pioneer work, the first public note of preparation was a speech to his constituents by Sir Julius Vogel in 1875, in which he stated that he was in favour of extending the franchise to women.

1878. The Government introduced an Electoral Bill which included the enfranchisement of ratepaying women. This passed the House of Representatives, but the Bill met with much opposition on other grounds in the Legislative Council, and was not proceeded with.

1886. The New Zealand Women's Christian Temperance Union was constituted this year, and one of its first actions was to form a franchise department. Mrs

the request of the Minister of Agriculture, by the National Council of Women of Canada, for distribution at the Glasgow International Exhibition, 1901.



Kate W. Sheppard was appointed superintendent to the department, and much vigorous work was done to draw all scattered sympathizers into union.

1887. Sir Julius Vogel (Colonial Treasurer) introduced a Bill to give universal suffrage to women. This was supported by the Premier, Sir Robert Stout, and passed second reading in the House of Representatives on May 12th by 41 to 22. But some voted in expectation its operation would be limited in Committee. The rejection of an amendment to that effect in Committee proved fatal to the Bill; it was thrown out on third reading.

1890. Sir John Hall moved a resolution on August 5th, "That the right of voting in the election of members of the House of Representatives should be extended to women." This was seconded by Mr. W. T. Reeves and supported by Mr. Ballance, and was carried by a majority of 126.

1891. On August 14th Sir John Hall presented some small petitions in favour of Women's Suffrage, which drew forth contemptuous remarks from some members as to the small percentage of women signing. "Will the hon. member suspend his remarks till I have done presenting petitions"—and then Sir John Hall produced a petition, described by the *Lyttelton Times* as magnificent and unequalled. It was 70 yards long and was rolling out from one end of the House to the other. A row of members, ranging themselves on either side to inspect the signatures, found no two alike, as they expected. Sir John stated the total of names was 9000. No one carped any more at the "small number."

On August 24th Sir John Hall introduced a Bill enacting that in all Acts relating to the representation of the people the words importing masculine gender shall include women. Carried by 32 to 7—majority 25. In Committee an amendment was proposed—with sinister intent—that women should also be eligible for Parliament. This was carried. The Bill was lost at the Legislative Council by two votes.

1892. In this year Sir John Hall presented a petition with 18,784 signatures. Attached to the petition was a statement that many of the signers had signed another petition—one against Women's Suffrage—believing its prayer to be the reverse. On July 21st Sir John Ballance introduced an Electoral Bill with an interpretation clause providing that "person include women." The Bill passed the House of Representatives, but proceeded no further.

1893. The Electoral Act passed both Houses, and received the assent of the Government on September 19th. A General Election was at hand, and immediately the women began to enrol themselves on the register, so that when the election took place in November the figures stood on the register—177,701 men, 109,461 women. Voting at the poll, 124,439 men, 90,290 women. "It has now been sufficiently long to remove it from the experimental stage," were the words of the Premier of New Zealand, the Hon. J. H. Seddon, when in England for the celebration of the Queen's Jubilee. "The best proof of its success may be found in the fact that there is not even a whispered suggestion of repealing it. It has come to stay." It is well to add, from

the testimony of an eye-witness, that the Maori women take a keen interest in the elections. Nearly half the Maoris registered at Auckland were women.

## II. SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

1885. On July 22nd, in the House of Assembly, Dr. Sterling moved, amid cheers, "That in the opinion of the House, women, except when under coverture, who fulfil the conditions and possess the qualifications on which the Parliamentary franchise for the Legislative Council is granted to men, shall, like them, be admitted to the Franchise for both Houses of Parliament."

On the motion of the Attorney-General the debate was adjourned to August 5th, when the discussion was continued by Mr. Caldwell, and carried without a division.

1889. July 21st. Dr. Sterling introduced a Bill of the same scope as the resolution of 1885—the Constitution Act Amendment Bill for extending the franchise to women.

The debate was adjourned to August 18th, continued on September 22nd, and again continued on October 13th, when second reading was carried by 19 to 17; but this did not give the absolute majority of the whole House which is required by the Constitution of the Colony for any altering with the Constitution. The Bill could not therefore be proceeded with.

So far not a single meeting had been held, nor petition sent up. There had been no outside agitation.

1887. A General Election took place. Dr. Sterling

did not re-enter Parliament, and Mr. Caldwell took charge of the Bill.

1888. November 7th. The Bill was read a second time by 18 to 17. Thus, again, the necessary absolute majority was not obtained.

1889. The Women's Suffrage League of South Australia was formed, which did much active work under the leadership of its President, Lady Colton, and of Mrs. Mary Lee, its devoted Honorary Secretary. Many petitions were presented that year, and votes approving the measure passed by many of the religious organizations in the Colony. In November the Bill passed by 25 to 17; but this increased majority was still insufficient for the necessary absolute majority.

1891 and 1893. This same necessity baffled progress.

1894. Dr. Cockburn, on the part of the Government, introduced a Constitution Amendment Bill in the Legislative Council, which should extend the franchise to adult women.

The opponents did their utmost to bring about its defeat by obstructive amendments, but their labour was in vain. They did, however, cause an alteration to the Bill in one important respect. They moved that the clause prohibiting women from sitting in Parliament be struck out, expecting thereby to wreck the Bill; but the supporters of the measure accepted the amendment, and so it was carried by a combination of opponents and supporters. On December 18th it passed the House of Representatives by 31 to 14, and the Constitution Amendment Act became law.

The clauses dealing with the qualifications of electors are as follows:—

(1) The right to vote for persons to sit in Parliament as members of the Legislative Council, and the right to vote for persons to sit in Parliament as members of the House of Assembly, are hereby extended to women.

(2) Women shall possess and may exercise the rights hereby granted, subject to the same qualifications and in the same manner as men.

1896. In recognition of the great service rendered by Mrs. Mary Lee in obtaining the suffrage, a presentation was made to her on February 14th of this year, in the Mayor's reception-room, Adelaide, the Premier, the Hon. C. C. Kingston, Dr. Cockburn, Minister of Education, and several members of Parliament being present. The Premier, in making the presentation, said that he recognized that whoever interested himself or herself as Mrs. Lee had done in one of the greatest constitutional reforms in Australian history, was entitled to their warmest thanks. They had much pleasure, now the victory was won, in giving expression, however faint, to their appreciation of her valued services. He was pleased to note that a uniform federal franchise, recognizing the women of all Australia, was to be fought for. He hoped they would never lay down their arms till there were no more provinces to conquer.

The first election after the new Act took place in April 1896, when women voted in quite equal proportion with men; and the first woman to record her vote at the poll in Adelaide was, with a happy fitness of things, the wife of one of the oldest and steadiest workers

for Women's Suffrage in the Colony, Mrs. Kirby, wife of the Rev. J. C. Kirby.

### III. NEW SOUTH WALES.

1890. Sir Henry Parkes, the veteran statesman and oftentimes Premier, gave the impetus in New South Wales by introducing a clause to give equal voting power to women in his Electoral Bill of 1890. The clause was eventually dropped, but the beginning had been made.

1891. The coming to the Colony of Lady Jersey gave further advance to the movement. The New South Wales Womanhood Suffrage League was formed at a meeting on May 6th, and further consolidated at another on June 4th, when Lady Windeyer was elected President, and Miss Rose Scott undertook the office of Honorary Secretary, which she still so ably fills. On July 30th Sir Henry Parkes moved a resolution that the franchise be extended to women "on the same conditions and subject to the same disqualifications as those imposed by law on male electors." The debate lasted for twelve hours, and at last, at 3 a.m., the resolution was lost by 57 noes to 34 ayes.

1894. Mr. O'Reilly moved that the time had now arrived when the franchise should be extended to women. Sir Henry Parkes and the then Premier, Mr. G. H. Reid, supported, and the motion was carried by a large majority.

1895-1899. No debate took place. Federal and other pressing questions absorbed the Legislature. But Miss Rose Scott and her committee worked steadily on.

1900. A change of Government again placed a staunch friend at the head of affairs, and Sir W. Lyne, as Premier, introduced a Bill in the House of Assembly on November 16th. The debate was continued on 28th, and the Bill lost by the small majority of 3—19 for, 22 against.

1901. In this year, August 22nd, the second reading was carried by 51 votes to 7, and the third reading, moved by the Premier, Mr. See, carried on the same afternoon. The Legislative Council also passed the second reading, but it was thrown out on third reading by 26 to 21.

#### IV. QUEENSLAND.

The record for Queensland is but brief. As yet no measure appears to have actually come before the Legislature. But here, as elsewhere, women have keenly felt their exclusion from the federal vote, and the Queensland Women's Suffrage Society shows itself to be alert. It was in 1891 that the question was first brought forward at all—when Miss Hannah Chenings visited the Colony on a lecture tour from Adelaide. Her description of the efforts of the League in South Australia stirred many Queensland women.

1894. An association was formed for Queensland.

1895. Petitions with over 11,000 signatures were sent to Parliament, and thirty members wrote favourable letters.

1897. A General Election gave opportunity to bring the question before candidates, many declaring

themselves in favour. The association appears to be working steadily and quietly at propagandist work.

1900. A deputation approached the Premier, Mr. Philp, urging him to bring in a Women's Suffrage Bill. He assured them that the Ministry intended to introduce a Reform Bill, whose main provision should be one adult, one vote; but no action in that direction appears to have been yet taken.

#### V. TASMANIA.

As early as 1885 a Constitution Amendment Act passed second reading in the Tasmanian House of Assembly, which provided for the extension of the franchise to unmarried women ratepayers; but notwithstanding the support of the Government, the question made no further advance in Parliament.

In recent years a Bill to enfranchise women on the same terms as men has passed the House of Assembly on several occasions, with increasing majorities; but the opponents are still too numerous to carry it through the Upper House. The Women's Christian Temperance Union have been the most energetic workers on its behalf.

#### VI. VICTORIA.

A Victorian Women's Suffrage Society was formed so long ago as 1885, but it was not until 1894 that the movement attained to anything like a united organized effort to bear on Parliament and the Government. During the General Election of 1894 the United



Council for Women's Suffrage brought the question before the candidates, and a majority of those returned were pledged to support the cause. The formation of that Council, as already said, was in large measure due to the organizing power of Mrs. Bear Crawford. It drew together the various organizations working in different places and different directions for women. From that time forward the movement has gone steadily forward.

1895. The Prime Minister, Sir George Turner, introduced a Bill in the House of Assembly, which passed through on November 26th without a division, and was rejected by two votes in the Legislative Council.

1896. A Constitutional Act Amendment Bill, introduced by the Hon. R. W. Best, passed the House of Assembly, October 8th, by 32 ayes to 19 noes; but was lost (December 16th) in the Council.

1897. A General Election took place, and Women's Suffrage was prominently placed in the Ministerial programme.

1898. Sir George Turner introduced a Women's Suffrage Bill, which passed the Legislative Assembly on August 22nd—ayes 52, noes 23; but in the Legislative Council—ayes 15, noes 19, and the noes had it.

1899. A similar story—ayes 54, noes 28—in the Assembly; but ayes 17, noes 27, in the Council.

1900. A new Ministry, but the Bill brought in by Mr. M'Lean—ayes 57, noes 26—again failed in the Legislative Council.

1901. The Hon. H. R. Williams, a very old supporter of the movement, took charge of the Bill in this year,

and an animated debate began on November 13th and was adjourned. But other burning questions of the hour crowded out the adjourned discussion.

The above details of Parliamentary history are taken from the useful little paper, the *Australian Woman's Sphere*, which appeared first in September 1900, under the editorship of Miss Vida Goldstein, who has at the same time been the energetic Honorary Secretary of the United Council of Women's Suffrage, which would reflect the aspiration of the Australian woman.

The dawn of a new nationhood  
She waits with hopeful eyes to see ;  
The bursting of the bonds she hears  
That sets her country's strong soul free,  
And feels her power, in future years,  
To mould its mighty course for good,  
To write in characters of gold,  
Brighter than seer has yet foretold,  
Her children's destiny.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Australian Girl and other Poems*, by Ethel Castilla. Melbourne, 1900.

NOTE.—In Victoria women voted for a short time by virtue of the Consolidated Electoral Bill, 1862, which provided that *all ratepayers* on the municipal rolls in Victoria should be on the Parliamentary Register. This was altered a few years later by the insertion of the word *male*.

## APPENDICES.

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### APPENDIX A.

*See* § 1.

#### ANNO PRIMO MARIAE—SESSIO TERTIA.

C. I. An Act that the regal power of this realm is as full in the Queen's Majesty as ever it was in her noble ancestors.

After reciting how, by descent of the Crown to the Queen, all regal power was invested in her "in as full, large, and ample manner as it hath done heretofore to any other her most noble progenitors, Kings of this realm," the Act continues—

"Nevertheless the most ancient statutes of this realm being made by Kings then reigning, do not only attribute and refer all prerogative, preheminance, power and jurisdiction royal unto the name of King, but do also give, assign and appoint the correction and punishment of all offenders against the regality and dignity of the Crown and the laws of the realm unto the King (4) by

occasion whereof the malicious and ignorant persons may be hereafter induced and persuaded unto this error and folly, to think that her highness could ne should have enjoy and use such like royal authority, power, preheminance, prerogative and jurisdiction, nor do ne execute and use all things concerning the said statutes and take the benefit and privilege of the same, nor correct and punish offenders against her most royal person and the regality and dignity of the crown of this realm and the dominion thereof, as the Kings of this realm her most noble progenitors have heretofore done, enjoyed, used and exercised.

“II. For the avoiding and clear extinguishment of the said error or doubt and for a plain declaration of the laws of this realm in that behalf:

“III. Be it declared and enacted by the authority of this present Parliament—that the law of this realm is and ever hath been and ought to be understood, that the Kingly and royal office of this realm and all dignities, prerogatives royal, power, preeminences and priveleges, authorities and jurisdictions thereunto annexed, united and belonging, being invested in either male or female, are and be and ought to be as fully, wholly, absolutely and entirely deemed, adjudged, accepted, invested and taken in the one as the other.

“(2) So that what and whensoever statute or law doth limit and appoint, that the King of this realm may or shall have, execute or do anything as King, or doth give any profit or comodity to the King, or doth limit or appoint any pain or punishment for the correction of offenders against the equality and dignity of the King

or of the Crown, the same the Queen (being supreme governess possessor inheretrix to the imperial Crown of this realm, as our said Sovereign Lady the Queen most justly presently is) may by the same authority and power likewise have, exercise, execute, punish, correct and do to all intents, constructions and purposes, without doubt, ambiguity, scruple or question; any custom, use or scruple, or any other thing whatsoever to be made to the contrary notwithstanding."

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 APPENDIX B.

*See § 3.*

*Wiltshire: The Topographical Collections of John Aubrey,*  
A.D. 1659-70.

In the preface to the above work, dated 28th April 1670, John Aubrey writes:—

"The young maydes were brought up (not at Hackney and Sarum Schools, etc. to learn pride and wantonnesse but) at the Nunneries where they had examples of piety and humility and modestie and obedience, to imitate and to practise. Hence they learned needle-work, the art of confectionary, surgery, (anciently no apothecaries or surgeons—the gentlewomen did cure their poore neighbours, their hands are now too fine—vide courtly Vice in comedie, *epilogue*), physick, writing, drawing, etc. Old Jacques (who lived where Charles Hardman did) could see from his House the Nunnes of the Priory (St. Maries near Kington St. Michael) come forth into the Nymph-hay with their rocks and

wheels to spinne, and with their soweing work. He would say that he hath told three score, but of Nunnes there were not so many, but in all with widowes, old maydes and younge girles, there might be such a number. This was a fine way of breeding up young women who are led more by example than precept, and a good retirement for widowes, grave single women to a civill virtuous and holy life."

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APPENDIX C.

*See* § 10.

COPY OF CIRCULAR PRINTED IN 1860.

PROSPECTUS OF THE LADIES' INSTITUTE,  
19 LANGHAM PLACE, W.

THE LADIES' INSTITUTE, 19 LANGHAM PLACE, W.

This Institute comprises the following departments :—

A LADIES' READING ROOM.—(1) The Ladies' Reading Room is open from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Leading Daily and Weekly Papers, Magazines and Reviews. Terms, one guinea per annum. A two guinea subscription enables the subscriber to bring with her any lady not a subscriber. N.B.—Professional ladies half price.

Ladies visiting the West End on shopping or other business, will find this a great convenience, as attached to the Reading Room is a Luncheon Room, and a room also for the reception of parcels, for the use of subscribers only.

## THE OFFICE OF THE "ENGLISHWOMAN'S JOURNAL."

(2) The *Englishwoman's Journal* has now been established for two years, and may be considered as the special organ for all that relates to the industrial employment, the education, and the social position of women. Every number contains four practical articles, a biography of some celebrated or particularly useful woman, a poem, a light paper, notices of books, open councils (or letters from various people interested in women's work) and a short summary of passing events. Its conductors desire to make it at once a source of accurate information and reference, and a medium for the expression of opinions on every point relating to its special objects. They feel that the moral interests of this country are deeply involved in the form and direction given to the present movement, and they earnestly hope that every future page may prove to be inspired by those principles which, if carried out, would tend to make women good and happy workers for the domestic and public welfare of England, and that its entire contents may be accepted by the worthiest of their country-women as expressing their feelings and their ideas.

[Then follows directions as to Post Office Rules, etc.]

## A REGISTER FOR WOMAN'S WORK.

(3) The Editors of the *Englishwoman's Journal* finding that constant applications are made to them by ladies in want of remunerative employment, and also

occasionally by employers of the higher branches of female labour, have determined to open a Register in connection with their Office. Their plan, however, does *not* include any ladies who devote themselves to private tuition, as an efficient register for governesses is kept by the excellent Institution at 66 Harley Street. Neither will they register applications concerning domestic service, as various offices exist in most towns throughout the kingdom, where those who require domestic servants may meet with respectable applicants. They desire to keep a register of any ladies who wish to become candidates for remunerative employment in charitable institutions, as nurses in hospitals, matrons in workhouses, teachers or superintendents in industrial schools, likewise for those who desire to obtain situations as secretaries, clerks, or book-keepers. Other kinds of employment will in all probability gradually suggest themselves in accordance with the needs of society. A book is now open at the Office, and five shillings will be charged for the entry of an application, which will be inserted without further charge as an advertisement in the *Englishwoman's Journal* for the ensuing month, thus securing publicity.

Employers will find this Register of great value; they are invited to inspect the book between the office hours of 10 to 5 o'clock; every facility will be given for their entering into correspondence with applicants. The Editors must, however, wholly decline acting as personal referees in any case.



## A COMMITTEE ROOM.

(4) A Committee Room is open for the use of philanthropic societies at stated periods, and on specified terms.

THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING THE EMPLOYMENT OF  
WOMEN.

(5) In connection with the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science.

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\* These form the Managing Committee.

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Morning and evening classes for arithmetic and bookkeeping are already opened under the superintendence of an experienced bookkeeper.

A class for law copying has commenced, and is already competent to undertake work. Solicitors will find their orders executed with accuracy and punctuality.

Membership consists in a donation of £5, or an annual subscription of 10s. Subscriptions and donations are received for special objects, or for the general fund, at the office, etc., etc.

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#### APPENDIX D.

*See* § 13.

#### THE DIVISION LIST ON MR. J. S. MILL'S AMENDMENT TO THE REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL, May 20th, 1867.

Question put: "That the word 'man' stand part of the clause."

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes, 196; Noes, 73; majority, 123.

#### AYES.

Acland, T. D.	Bagge, Sir. W.
Adam, W. P.	Baillie, Rt. Hon. H. J.
Adderley, Rt. Hon. C. B.	Barnett, H.
Annesley, Hon. Col. H.	Beach, Sir M. H.
Ayrton, A. S.	Beaumont, W. B.

Bernard, Hon. Col. H. B.	Corry, Rt. Hon. H. L.
Blennerhassett, Sir R.	Cox, W. T.
§ Bourne, Col.	Crawford, R. W.
Brett, W. B.	§ Cubitt, G.
Briscoe, J. I.	Dalkeith, Earl of.
Brooks, R.	Dering, Sir E. C.
Brown, J.	Dick, F.
Browne, Lord J. T.	§ Dickson, Major A. G.
Bruce, Lord C.	§ Dillwyn, L. L.
Bruen, H.	§ Dimsdale, R.
Buckley, E.	Dunkellin, Lord.
Bulkley, Sir E.	Dunne, General.
Buller, Sir E. M.	Du Pré, C. G.
Burrell, Sir P.	Dyott, Col. R.
Buxton, Sir T. F.	Eckersley, N.
Campbell, A. H.	Edwards, Sir H.
Candlish, J.	Egerton, Sir P. G.
Cane, Rt. Hon. S.	Egerton, Hon. A. F.
Capper, C.	Egerton, E. C.
Cardwell, Rt. Hon. E.	Egerton, Hon. W.
Cartwright, Col.	Enfield, Viscount.
Cecil, Lord E. H. B. G.	Esmonde, J.
Chambers, T.	Evans, T. W.
Clay, J.	§ Ewing, H. E. Crum-
Cole, Hon. J. L.	Fellowes, E.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.	Fergusson, Sir J.
Collier, Sir R. P.	Floyer, J.
Colville, C. R.	Foljambe, E. J. S.
Conolly, T.	Freshfield, C. K.

§ Those marked § afterwards voted in favour of the Women's Suffrage Bill.

Gallwey, Sir W. P.	Hildyard, T. B. T.
Gaselee, Sergt. S.	Hope, A. J. B. B.
Getty, S. G.	Howard, Hon. C. W. G.
Gilpin, C.	Howes, E.
Gladstone, Rt. Hon. W. E.	Huddleston, J. W.
Glyn, G. G.	§ Hunt, G. W.
Goddard, A. L.	Ingham, R.
Gore, J. R. O.	Jervis, Major.
Gore, W. R. O.	Jones, D.
Graves, S. R.	Karslake, Sir J. B.
Gray, Lieut.-Col.	Kekewick, S. T.
Greenall, G.	Kelk, J.
Greene, E.	Kendall, N.
Grove, T. F.	King, J. K.
Guinness, Sir B. L.	King, J. G.
Gwyn, H.	Knatchbull-Hugessen, E.
Hamilton, Rt. Hon. Lord C.	Leader, N. P.
Hamilton, E. W. T.	Lechmere, Sir E. A. H.
Hanmer, Sir J.	Leeman, G.
Harely, Rt. Hon. G.	Lewis, H.
Hartley, J.	Lindsay, Hon. Col. C.
Hartopp, E. B.	Locke, J.
Hayter, Capt. A. D.	§ Lopes, Sir M.
Headlam, Rt. Hon. T. E.	§ M'Lagan, P.
Heathcote, Sir W.	Merry, J.
Heneage, E.	Miller, W.
§ Henley, Rt. Hon. J. W.	Mitchell, T. A.
Henly, Lord.	Monk, C. J.
Herbert, Hon. Col. P.	Montagu, Rt. Hon. Lord R.

§ Those marked § afterwards voted in favour of the Women's Suffrage Bill.

Montgomery, Sir G.	Royston, Viscount.
Morgan, O.	Russell, Sir C.
Mowbray, Rt. Hon. J. R.	St. Aubyn, J.
Naas, Lord.	Samuda, J. D'A.
Neate, C.	Scholefield, W.
Newdigate, C. N.	Schreiber, C.
Newport, Viscount.	Slater-Booth, G.
Nicholson, W.	Scott, Sir W.
Nicol, J. D.	Seely, C.
Noel, Hon. G. J.	Selwyn, C. J.
O'Reilly, M. W.	Severne, J. E.
Packe, C. W.	Seymour, G. H.
Packe, Col.	Simonds, W. B.
Pakington, Rt. Hon. Sir J.	Smith, A.
Parker, Major W.	Smollett, P. B.
Pease, J. W.	Stanley, Lord.
Peel, Rt. Hon. Sir R.	Stanley, Hon. F.
Potter, E.	Stanley, Hon. W. O.
Powell, F. S.	Stronge, Sir J. M.
Price, R. G.	Stucley, Sir G. S.
Price, W. P.	§ Taylor, Col.
Pugh, D.	Tollemache, J.
Read, C. S.	Trevor, Lord A. E. Hill-
Rebow, J. W.	Turner, C.
Repton, G. W. J.	Vandeleur, Col.
Ridley, Sir M. W.	Vandulze, P.
Robertson, P. F.	Vernon, H. F.
Roebuck, J. A.	Vivian, H. H.
Rolt, Sir J.	Walker, Major G. G.

§ Those marked § afterwards voted in favour of the Women's Suffrage Bill.

Walrond, J. W.  
Walsh, A.  
Waterhouse, S.  
Whalley, G. H.  
Whitmore, H.

Williamson, Sir H.  
Winnington, Sir T. E.  
Wise, H. C.  
Woods, H.  
Wyndham, Hon. H.

*Tellers.*

Laing, S.

Karslake, E. K.

## NOES.

Allen, W. S.  
Amberley, Viscount.  
Baines, E.  
Barnes, T.  
Barrow, W. H.  
Bass, M. T.  
Bazley, T.  
Beach, W. W. B.  
Biddulph, M.  
Blake, J. A.  
Bowyer, Sir George.  
\*Bright, J.  
Cowen, J.  
Dalglish, R.  
Denman, Hon. G.  
Eykyn, R.  
Fawcett, H.  
Goldsmid, Sir F. H.  
Gorst, J. E.

Grant, A.  
Gridley, Capt. G. H.  
Hadfield, G.  
Harvey, R. B.  
Hay, Lord J.  
Hay, Lord W. M.  
Henderson, J.  
Hibbert, J. T.  
Hodgkinson, G.  
Holden, I.  
Hughes, T.  
Hurst, R. H.  
Jackson, W.  
Jervoise, Sir J. C.  
King, Hon. P. J. L.  
\*Labouchere, H.  
Langton, W. G.  
Leatham, W. H.  
\*Lefevre, G. J. S.

\* Afterwards voted against the Women's Suffrage Bill.



## APPENDIX E.

*See* § 17.

MEMORANDA OF CLAIMS MADE BY WOMEN TO BE PLACED  
ON THE REGISTER FOR THE ELECTION OF 1868, AS  
FAR AS PARTICULARS CAN BE ASCERTAINED.

Places where women claimed.

Aberdeen, . . .	All women's names were placed on the register.
Aberdare, . . .	One name.
Baguley (Cheshire), .	Mrs. Rachel Pearson's name registered.
Birmingham, . . .	559.
Cockermouth, . . .	1. The revising barrister spoke in strong terms in favour.
Castle Sowerby, . .	9.
Durham— Conside, Knitsley,	{ The overseers considered they had no alternative but to admit the women.
Edinburgh, . . .	{ County—Miss Mary Burton. City—239 claims. Sheriff decided against. Taken to the Supreme Courts of Appeal and rejected.
Fowley (Hants), . .	Overseers allowed names.
Hatfield, . . .	14 widows struck off.
Honiton, . . .	20 £12 householders claimed.
Ipswich, . . .	Claims not allowed.



## Places where women claimed.

Lancashire, E.—	}	The overseers allowed the claims.
Great Marden, .		
Little Marden, .		
Lancashire, N.—		
Ulverston, .		
Lancashire, S.—		
Farnworth, .		
Todmorden, .		
Gorton, .		
Houghton, .		
Levenshulme, .		
Denton, .		
Lancashire, S.W.—	}	Notices of objection held to be bad in all cases but one, and that claim held good.
Lydiate, .		
Scarisbrick, .		
Ormskirk, .	}	A large number claimed. Revising barrister allowed the claims.
Kent—		
Ashford, . . .		
Cheveney, . . .	Several claims, rejected.	
Frinted, . . .	33 claims, allowed.	
Sittingbourne, . . .	48 claims.	
Leeds, . . . . .		23 claims, rejected. [Mrs. Mary Howell fined for making "a frivolous claim."]

## Places where women claimed.

Manchester, . . .	5750	} Appeal allowed to Court of Common Pleas. 9 women whose names were not struck off voted in the election, November 1868.
Cheetham, . . .	7	
Chorlton, . . .	?	
Hulme, . . .	10	
<b>Metropolis—</b>		
City, . . .		Appeal granted.
Finsbury, . . .		Claim admitted.
Lambeth, . . .		Claim rejected.
Marylebone, . . .	28	claimed; an appeal granted.
Southwark, . . .		Overseers admitted the names.
Westminster, . . .		Two cases struck out, but an appeal granted in one.
<b>Middlesex—</b>		
Hillingdon, . . .		Overseers admit claim.
Penge, . . .		1 claim.
Salford, Broughton, } Pendleton, . . . }	257	claims. { Appeal granted (Court of Com- mon Pleas).
Salisbury (Fisherton),	16	claims.
Stafford (Marchington),	11	claims.
Winterton, . . .		Claims allowed.
<b>West Riding, Yorks—</b>		
Idle, . . .	2	claims struck off.
Warwickshire, N., . . .	18	claims disallowed.
Wigton, . . .	8	claims taken to the Supreme Courts of Appeal.

The above particulars are mainly drawn from the Annual Report of the Manchester Women's Suffrage

Society and the *Englishwoman's Review*, and for Scotland from the First Annual Report of the Edinburgh Society.

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## APPENDIX F.

*See* § 33.

MEMORIAL TO MR. GLADSTONE RESPECTING  
MR. WOODALL'S CLAUSE. (June 1884.)

TO THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.

The undersigned members of Parliament respectfully represent:

That the Franchise Bill being now in Committee a favourable opportunity is afforded for the discussion of the amendment for extending its provisions to women, of which notice has been given by Mr. Woodall.

That your memorialists have heard a rumour that Her Majesty's Government have declared against allowing the question to be discussed and decided on its merits on the ground that the adoption of the proposal might endanger the Bill.

That your memorialists are of opinion that the claim of women who are householders and ratepayers is just and reasonable, and that the time when the House is engaged in amending the law relating to the representation of the people is the proper time for the consideration of this claim.

That during the discussion in Committee on the Reform Bill of 1867, an amendment for extending its

provisions to women was introduced by Mr. J. S. Mill, and that on that occasion the Government of the day offered no opposition to the full and free discussion of the question, and placed no restriction on the free exercise of the judgment of members of their party as to the manner in which they should vote. The tellers appointed against Mr. Mill's motion were not even the Government tellers.

That your memorialists earnestly pray that the precedent so instituted may be followed on the present occasion, and that the clause proposed by Mr. Woodall may be submitted to the free and unbiassed decision of the House on its own merits.

They desire earnestly to express their conviction that the course of allowing the question to be an open one, on which the Government is prepared to accept the decision of the House, cannot possibly endanger or prejudice the Franchise Bill. In connection with this your memorialists would press on your attention the fact that Mr. Woodall's amendment is in the form of a new clause, and would not therefore come under discussion until the Bill as it stands has passed through Committee.

Wm. Agnew (S.E. Lancashire).

W. S. Allen (Newcastle-u.-Lyme).

George Anderson (Glasgow).

Benjamin Armitage (Salford).

Arthur Arnold (Salford).

J. Spencer Balfour (Tamworth).

James W. Barclay (Forfarshire).

A. Barnes (Derbyshire, E.).

J. R. Blake (Waterford Co.).

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| R. P. Blennerhassett<br>(Kerry).     | Albert Grey (Northumber-<br>land, S).       |
| Jacob Bright (Manchester).           | Daniel Grant (Maryle-<br>bone).             |
| Thomas Burt (Morpeth).               | G. W. Hastings (E. Wor-<br>cestersh.).      |
| W. S. Caine (Scarborough).           | Frank Henderson (Dun-<br>dee).              |
| Charles Cameron (Glas-<br>gow).      | I. Holden (Yorks., W. R.,<br>N. Div.).      |
| E. H. Carbutt (Monmouth<br>Dist.).   | John R. Hollond (Brighton).                 |
| Stewart Clarke (Paisley).            | C. H. Hopwood (Stock-<br>port).             |
| J. C. Clarke (Abingdon).             | J. J. Jenkins (Carmarthen<br>Dis.).         |
| George Courtauld (Mal-<br>don).      | John Kinnear, D.D. (Done-<br>gal).          |
| Leonard H. Courtney (Lis-<br>keard). | Wilfred Lawson (Carlisle).                  |
| J. Cowen (Newcastle-on-<br>Tyne).    | Thos. Lea (Donegal).                        |
| David Davies (Cardigan,<br>etc.).    | Robert Leake (S.E. Lanca-<br>shire).        |
| James Dickson (Dun-<br>gannon).      | W. Henry Leatham (York,<br>W. R., S. Div.). |
| Thomas A. Dickson (Ty-<br>rone).     | Andrew Lusk (Finsbury).                     |
| Henry Fawcett (Hackney).             | C. Fraser Mackintosh<br>(Inverness, Dist.). |
| De Ferrieres (Cheltenham).           | P. S. Macliver (Plymouth).                  |
| W. Findlater (Monaghan).             | A. M'Arthur (Leicester).                    |
| J. B. Firth (Chelsea).               | W. M'Arthur (Lambeth).                      |
| Lewis Fry (Bristol).                 | Peter M'Lagan (Linlith-<br>gow).            |
| Theodore Fry (Darlington).           |   |
| Edw. T. Gourley (Sunder-<br>land).   |   |

- |                                   |                                      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Charles M'Laren (Stafford).       | Jas. Stansfeld (Halifax).            |
| Samuel Morley (Bristol).          | S. Storey (Sunderland).              |
| Geo. Palmer (Reading).            | H. Villiers Stuart (Waterford Co.).  |
| R. D. Peddie (Kilmarnock, Dist.). | William Summers (Staley-bridge).     |
| Fredk. Pennington (Stockport).    | P. A. Taylor (Leicester).            |
| W. H. Powell (Carmarthen-shire).  | T. C. Thompson (Durham Dist.).       |
| L. M. Pugh (Cardiganshire).       | John P. Thomasson (Bolton).          |
| Henry Richard (Merthyr).          | C. P. Villiers (Wolverhampton).      |
| Thos. Roe (Derby).                | E. W. Watkin (Hythe).                |
| Henry B. Samuelson (Frome).       | Benj. Whitworth (Drogheda).          |
| Thomas Shaw (Halifax).            | W. H. Wills (Coventry).              |
| Henry B. Sheridan (Dudley).       | S. C. Evans Williams (Radnor Dist.). |
| Jno. Simon (Dewsbury).            | W. Woodall (Stoke-on-Trent).         |
| John Slagg (Manchester).          | S. Woolf (Pontefract).               |
| T. E. Smith (Tynemouth).          |                                      |
| C. R. Spencer (Northampt., N.).   |                                      |

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 APPENDIX G.

*See § 33.*

LETTER FROM LADIES TO MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

The following letter was sent in May 1884 to members of both Houses of Parliament:—

We desire to call your attention to the claim of

women who are heads of households to be included in the operation of the Government Franchise Bill.

Women have continuously presented this claim before Parliament and the country since the Reform Bill of 1867. The introduction of a measure declared by the Government to be intended to deal with the franchise in an exhaustive manner renders it especially necessary now to urge it upon the attention of Parliament.

We respectfully represent that the claim of duly-qualified women for admission within the pale of the constitution is fully as pressing as that of the agricultural labourer, and that the body of electors who would thereby be added to the constituencies would be at least equal in general and political intelligence to the great body of agricultural and other labourers who are to be enfranchised by the Government Bill.

Among this body would be found women landowners, who form one-seventh of the land proprietors of the country; women of means and position living on their own property; schoolmistresses and other teachers; women engaged in professional, literary, and artistic pursuits; women farmers, merchants, manufacturers, and shopkeepers; besides large numbers of self-supporting women engaged in industrial occupations. The continued exclusion of so large a proportion of the property, industry, and intelligence of the country from all representation in the Legislature is injurious to those excluded, and to the community at large.

Several Bills having special reference to the interests and status of women have been introduced in Parlia-

ment during the present session. This affords a powerful reason for the immediate enfranchisement of women, in order that members of Parliament may have the same sense of responsibility towards the class affected by them as in dealing with questions relating to men.

For these and other reasons we earnestly beg that you will give your support to the amendment to be introduced by Mr. Woodall in Committee on the Representation of the People Bill for including women householders in its operation.—We are, Sir, yours faithfully,

Eveline Portsmouth (Countess of Portsmouth).	E. Adelaide Manning.
F. P. Verney (Lady Verney).	M. Power (Lady Power).
Florence Nightingale.	Louisa Colthurst (Dowager Lady Colthurst).
Anne J. Clough (Newnham College).	Frances E. Hoggan, M.D.
Clara E. L. Rayleigh (Lady Rayleigh).	Florence Davenport Hill (Poor Law Guardian).
Selina Hogg (Lady Hogg).	Louisa Twining (Poor Law Guardian).
Anna Swanwick.	Maryanne Donkin (Poor Law Guardian).
Julia Camperdown (Countess of Camperdown).	Rosamond Davenport Hill (M.L.S.B.)
Mina E. Hollond (Mrs John Hollond).	Mary Howitt.
(Lady) Dorothy Nevill.	Maria G. Grey.
Millicent Garrett Fawcett.	Emily A. E. Shireff.
Helen P. Bright Clark.	Deborah Bowring (Lady Bowring).
Jane E. Cobden.	Emily Pfeiffer.
	Barbara L. S. Bodichon.



- Augusta Webster.  
 Catherine M. Buckton.  
 Frances M. Buss (N. London Collegiate School).  
 Sophia Bryant, B.Sc.  
 Malvina Borchardt (Head Mistress of Devonport High School).  
 Louisa Boucherett.  
 Jessie Boucherett.  
 Margaret Byers (Ladies' Collegiate Sch., Belfast).  
 Margaret Gillies.  
 Agnes D. Beavington Atkinson.  
 H. W. A. Ward (Mrs. E. M. Ward).  
 Rose Mary Crawshay.  
 Clara Montalba.  
 Ellen Montalba.  
 Margaret Hunt (Mrs. A. W. Hunt).  
 Louisa S. Goldsmid (Lady Goldsmid).  
 Madge Kendal Grimston (Mrs. Kendal).  
 Emilia F. S. Pattison (Mrs. Mark Pattison).  
 Ethel R. S. Boys.  
 Emily Spender.  
 Ellen Spender.
- Alice Kemp Welch.  
 Sophia Jex Blake, M.D.  
 A. Prideaux.  
 Agnes T. Ward (Principal of the Bishopsgate Training College).  
 Louisa Atkins, M.D.  
 Emily Davies (Hon. Sec., Girton College).  
 Alice Westlake (M.L.S.B.).  
 (Lady) E. Maude Parry.  
 Flora C. Stevenson (Member of the Edinburgh School Board).  
 Josephine E. Butler.  
 C. Buchan (Dowager Countess of Buchan).  
 Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, M.D.  
 Louise Jopling.  
 Edith J. Simcox.  
 Elizabeth Blackwell, M.D.  
 Mabel Sharman Crawford.  
 Eleanor Mildred Sidgwick (Mrs. Henry Sidgwick).  
 Julia Wedgwood.  
 Adeline Paulina Irby.  
 Edith Shove, M.B.  
 Isabel Thorne (Secretary, London School of Medicine for Women).

H. M. Jones (Head Mistress, Notting Hill High School).	Elizabeth Pease Nichol. Frances Power Cobbe. Amelia B. Edwards.
Eleanor Grove (Principal, Student's Home, Gordon Square).	Charlotte Angas Scott (Girton College). The Hon. E. Canning.

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 APPENDIX H.

*See § 48.*

TABLE OF STATUTES PASSED IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN VICTORIA WHICH HAVE DIRECT BEARING ON THE INTERESTS OF WOMEN.

*A.—On their Political Status, as Citizens.*

*B.—On their Civil Status, as Wives and Mothers.*

*C.—On their Professional and Industrial Status.*

*A.—Political Status, as Citizens.*

STATUTE.

PURPORT.

1850. Act for Shortening the Language used in Acts of Parliament (13 & 14 Vict. ch. 21).

Provides that the masculine gender shall include the feminine unless otherwise expressly provided.

1869. Municipal Corporations Act (32 & 33 Vict. ch. 55, § 9).

Restored to women rate-payers the vote in municipal elections which had been taken away by the Municipal Corporation Act of 1835.

1870. Elementary Education Act (33 & 34 Vict. ch. 75). Created School Boards and placed women on a complete equality both as electors and as eligible for elections.
1874. Public Worship Regulation Act (37 & 38 Vict. ch. 85). Interprets "Parishioner" as a *Male Person*.
1881. Municipal Elections (Scotland) Act (44 Vict. ch. 13). Assimilates the law of Scotland with that of England, so far as to place women on the municipal registers.
1888. The County Electors Act (51 Vict. ch. 10). Gave women equal franchises with men for the election of councillors for the County Councils created by the Local Government Act of that year. Ditto for Scotland.
1889. Local Government (Scotland) Act (52 & 53 Vict. ch. 50).
1889. Interpretation Act (52 & 53 Vict. ch. 63). Repeals and reaffirms the Act of 1850.
1894. Local Government Act (56 & 57 Vict. ch. 73). The Local Government Act of 1894, which reorganized the parochial Poor Law administration in the counties, confirmed the rights of women to all local franchises and their

eligibility as Poor Law Guardians; and made them also eligible as Parish and District Councillors.

1896. Poor Law Guardian, Ireland (Women) Act (59 Vict. ch. 5).

Women were for the first time made eligible as Poor Law Guardians in Ireland.

1898. Irish Local Government Act (61 & 62 Vict. ch. 37).

The system of local government in Ireland was reorganized on similar lines to that in England. Women who had hitherto been excluded from the municipal franchise now had all local franchises conferred on them, and were made eligible for Rural and Urban District Councils.

1899. The London Government Act.

Changed the system of vestries to that of Borough Councils throughout the Metropolitan districts. Women had been eligible on the old vestries and several were then serving. Their claim to sit on the new Borough Councils was however, rejected.

*B.—Civil Status, as Wives and Mothers.*

1839. Custody of Infants Act (2 & 3 Vict. ch. 54). (Known as Sergeant Talfourd's Act). Empowered the Lord Chancellor to leave custody of her child to the mother up to the age of seven.
1870. Married Women's Property Act (33 & 34 Vict. ch. 93). The Acts of 1870 and 1874 secured to married women all rights to property acquired by their own skill and industry, and to all investments of their own money in their own names.
1874. Ditto (37 & 38 Vict. ch. 50).
1877. Ditto for Scotland (40 & 41 Vict. ch. 29).
1882. Ditto (45 & 46 Vict. ch. 75). The Act of 1882 consolidated and amended the previous Acts, enabling married women to acquire, hold and dispose by will or otherwise of any real or personal property without the intervention of a trustee.
1873. Custody of Infants Act (36 Vict. ch. 12.). Allows the mother to have custody of her child up to sixteen.
1878. Matrimonial Causes Act (41 Vict. ch. 19). Enables a wife, in cases of aggravated assaults, to get a separation order.

1885. Criminal Law Amendment Act (48 & 49 Vict. ch. 69). Raises the age of consent from thirteen to sixteen.

1886. Guardianship of Infants Act (49 & 50 Vict. ch. 27). Greatly improves the status of mothers by giving the surviving mother the right to be joint guardian in addition to any appointed by the father. The Act also enables her to appoint a guardian to act in case of the father's death or incapacity; it also requires the Court to have regard to the wishes of the mother as well as of the father.

1890. Intestates Act (53 & 54 Vict. ch. 29). When a man dies intestate, leaving a widow and no children, all his estate, if under £500, goes to the widow; if over £500 she shall have £500 in addition to her share in the residue.

1891. Slander of Women Act (54 & 55 Vict. ch. 51). Renders imputation of moral misconduct actionable, without having first to prove damages.

1895. Summary Jurisdiction (Married Women's) Act (58 & 59 Vict. ch. 39). Extends and strengthens the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1878.

*C.—Professional and Industrial Status.*

1842. Coal Mines Act (5 & 6 Vict. ch. 99). Prohibited the work of women in mines.
1844. (7 Vict. ch. 16.) Women were brought under the same rules as young persons.
1847. (10 Vict. ch. 29.) Ten hours a day for women and young persons.
1850. (13 & 14 Vict. ch. 54.) Fixing a uniform working day for women and young persons.
1876. Medical Education Act (39 & 40 Vict. ch. 41). Permitting medical degrees to be conferred on women.
1878. Factory and Workshop Act (1878) (41 Vict. ch. 16). Consolidated the above and various intermediate acts dealing with particular trades.
1895. Factory and Workshop Act (1895) (58 & 59 Vict. ch. 37). Intensified the special restrictions on women's labour.
1901. Factory and Workshop Consolidation and Amendment Act. Consolidated all previous legislation and rendered some of the regulations for women more elastic.

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<sup>1</sup>Exclusive of Annual Reports of the various Women's Suffrage organizations.



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PRINTED BY  
NEILL AND COMPANY, LIMITED,  
EDINBURGH.

